

Issue Ten **THE** Summer 2022
**SKELETON
PRESS**

Your Neighbour Is a 'Tree

BY JANE KIRBY



If you had known me in my late teens, you might have called me a “tree hugger” — an Environmental Studies student who wore hemp skirts, ate a vegan diet, and quietly scoffed at anyone carrying a disposable cup. But it was only last year that, inspired by my toddler, I hugged a tree for the first time. I’d always thought of tree-hugging as a metaphor, so I was taken aback by the deep stillness and sense of connection that wrapping my arms around the tree inspired in me. The experience reminded me of the words of Indian writer and activist Arundhati Roy: “Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”

This issue of *The Skeleton Press* is devoted to trees. Sometimes revered but, like many of our community members (human and otherwise), often taken for granted, trees have a lot to offer us if we care to listen. “Your neighbourhood is a forest/Your neighbour is a tree,” writes Ron Shore in his contribution to this issue. What would it mean to take this adage to heart?

We all know trees are valuable. They provide a refuge from the heat on hot summer days; sequester carbon (though, as Lawrence Scanlan points out in his interview with Ed Struzik, not as much as wetlands); act as habitats to plants, animals, and insects; and are nature’s original jungle gym. We exist in a dynamic relationship with trees, just as trees exist in relation to each other: Scientists have recently found that trees communicate with each other through networks of underground fungi — they share resources and nutrients, warn each other of threats, and generally support one another’s survival. Older trees are linked to younger trees; dying trees pass their nutrients and carbon on to the next generation. Because of their long life spans, trees take us back into the past and reach forward into the future: planting a tree is perhaps the ultimate embodiment of hope.

In the face of multiple crises, we hope you can take inspiration from trees and enter the summer season full of hope, community, and interconnectedness.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Skeleton Press is interested in sharing more stories and would like to invite you to contribute by writing a letter to the editor.

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ATTENTION WRITERS & ILLUSTRATORS

The Skeleton Press invites pitches for articles of relevance to the neighbourhood and welcomes both new and experienced writers. To pitch, send a short (max 150 word) statement of what you'd like to write about and a writing sample if you have one available. Most articles are limited to 800 words. We pay \$0.30 a word (\$240 per 800 word article). The theme for the next issue is “neighbourhood water systems.”

We also welcome new illustrators. If interested in being on our roster, please send us an expression of interest and samples of your work. We pay market rates for illustrations.

Send pitches and expressions of interest to: skeletonpresseditor@gmail.com.

If you would like to donate

to the Skeleton Park Arts Festival to help keep this newspaper in print, please visit our donation page at CanadaHelps.org

COVER ILLUSTRATION: Floriana Ehninger-Cuervo

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MANDATE

The Skeleton Press was initiated by the Skeleton Park Arts Festival to create a free print publication that captures the vibrancy and diversity of the neighbourhood. We are interested in how print media can communicate and build relationships differently than digital publishing, and in how the act of consuming and distributing the physical object can build community. We hope copies of *The Skeleton Press* will be passed from hand to hand, sparking conversation with neighbours over the fence or at the corner store, and strengthening our sense of place and each other.

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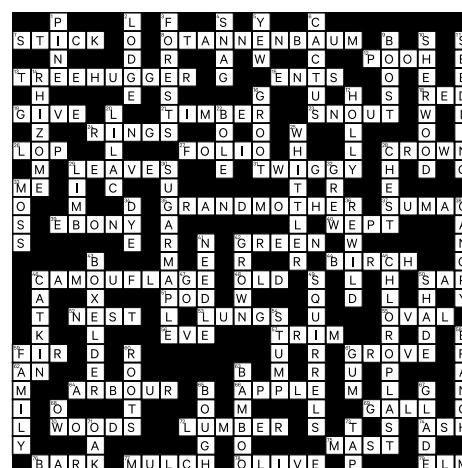
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Stewarding a Park in Transition

The case for planting, and planning ahead

STORY BY ANNE KERSHAW

Many admirers of the magnificent foliage of one the City's most beloved and used parks may not be aware that it is a green space in transition.

The majestic tree canopy at McBurney Park is close to reaching the peak of its beauty and lifespan. Planted at the turn of the century, the park's forty-nine silver maples will need to be felled one by one over the coming years as they begin to pose an increased risk to users of the park.

Fortunately, a committed group of neighbours and City officials are carefully planning and nurturing the arboricultural health of the park and are determined to see it evolve into a sustainable and splendid array of greenery for future generations to enjoy.

This is not an easy or straightforward undertaking. McBurney Park, known to many as Skeleton Park, is officially designated as a cemetery. Founded as Kingston's primary burial ground in 1819 (until the Cataraqui Cemetery was built thirty years later), the property is believed to be the final resting place of as many as ten thousand people. Over the years, the occasional discovery of an emergent headstone or of bone fragments has been a reminder to the community of the sacred aspect of the park.

For this reason, McBurney Park poses special challenges to landscapers and planters. Ontario legislation governing cemeteries imposes strict limits — with heavy fines attached — to disturbing archaeological artifacts. When it was decided to build a park on top of the cemetery in the 1880s, attempts to intern the bodies, often stacked or part of multiple graves, proved too difficult. Today most rest in shallow soil close to the surface, above a layer of bedrock.

Understanding the need for precision and a road-map for the future, in 2018 the City of Kingston, in partnership with the McBurney Park Neigh-

bourhood Association (MPNA), commissioned an archeological survey using GPS and test pits to determine where new trees can be planted.

The underground survey has proved invaluable, says Simon Smith, a member of the MPNA whose passion and horticultural expertise have made him chief advocate for the neighborhood tree canopy. "Over the years I have gravitated to the majesty of trees," he says.

Most of the standing silver maples, planted during a major tree-planting operation by the City in 1905, are now reaching maturity. "We expect to lose two or three silver maples annually as they are cut down when posing an unacceptable level of risk. In fifty years, there will likely be only a handful left," says Smith. "Because so many are going to fail, we are going to see a park, in a number of years, comprised of younger and smaller trees."

As trees are replaced, the City is now able to take a highly strategic approach aimed at creating a beautifully treed park for the future. "We are ensuring that the replanting includes using good urban trees that are sturdy, last a long time, are disease-resistant and diverse, with differing rates of growth and height maturity," says Smith.

This includes sugar maples, lindens, and new disease-resistant elms, he says.

Smith also advocates for the introduction of tree species that acknowledge how climate change will affect future growing patterns. "Just south of here in Syracuse, they grow tulip trees, sycamores, and sweetgum. These are beautiful trees that would do well in Kingston."

To supplement the work of the City's often overstretched forestry crew, Smith also organizes neighborhood volunteers to do watering and after-care as well as other more labour-intensive work.

This includes recruiting a large group of individuals with wheelbarrows full of wood chips to create a

mulch boundary around tree trunks. This protects them from "trimming damage" when industrial grass mowers get too close and strip tree bark, injuring the tree.

Community devotion to the park and the ability of residents to work productively with the City has greatly benefited the community.

Eugene Conners, the City of Kingston's forest technologist whose responsibilities include risk assessment of aging trees and maintenance of parkland trees, has embraced the support and knowledge offered by the MPNA. He describes Smith as a "god-send" for how he has mobilized volunteer support and shared his own expertise. "He often makes informed suggestions about species selection and has even himself grown some of the trees we have planted in the park," says Conners.

He calls McBurney Park a "a bit of a gem" for its unifying design of diagonal walkways merging at the centre, and the spirit of ownership demonstrated by residents. "They provide a valuable level of stewardship."

Conners has seen a growing appreciation and love of trees by people in general, especially after the 1998 ice storm killed and damaged so many trees. The City's new tree-planting programs, which enable property owners to purchase trees at a significant discount to plant on their own property, has seen an overwhelming response.

During the program pilot last spring, the City sold out of the allotted 1,800 trees in just six days. The new municipal budget has doubled the inventory to 3,600 for staggered distribution in the spring and fall.

"We are investing in trees and how our city will look in eighty years. This is something we are doing for the people who come after us. That is part of the beauty of it," says Conners.



ANNE KERSHAW is an author, reporter and editor who worked for the Kingston Whig-Standard during the paper's heyday and later at Queen's as Director of Communications and Public Affairs. She has won numerous national journalism awards.

Aerial view of Skeleton Park
PHOTO CREDIT: Jay Middaugh



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Rose DeShaw is eighty years old and lives on the corner of Barrie and Colborne Streets with her husband Grant. Varsity Realty Inc. (a student housing company) has proposed that a sixteen-storey highrise be built around her home. The land is currently zoned for buildings no more than three storeys high. The newly proposed city-wide zoning bylaws being considered by City staff and Council would limit buildings on this land to four to six storeys. It remains to be seen how the City will respond. Here are Rose's thoughts on the matter.

One thing you can call developers is shortsighted – always in a hurry to cram as many tenants as possible into the cheapest structure that can be thrown together. And usually in downtown Kingston it's for students, with the argument that if we put students in high-rises, the other kinds of houses will be free for the city's more permanent residents. . . except those houses are bought up, too. Either by speculators, by student rental companies, or by out-of-towners just "buying a house for the kids."

Here we are, the very first capital of Canada, held hostage to developers who have already destroyed our waterfront, run rampant over downtown limestone, and are now gobbling down the settled communities of the north side. The *wrong* side of the tracks, where forty-three years ago no financial institutions gave mortgages.

I have lived in this house for forty years. I started an out-of-print bookshop on the bottom floor when my first husband suddenly lost his job. Some 3,500 books later, when I was widowed, I asked Grant Bourdon — the Hermit of Buck Lake — to move into my top floor in the middle of a bad winter. We married and he's lived here ever since.

I would like to stay in my home but I have been told that it will be impossible to live here during the construction of a sixteen-storey condominium around my house. I don't know where we will go. The song, "This Ole House" encapsulates our situation pretty accurately now — "Gabriel done brought in his chariot when the wind blew down the door." The developer has no chariot but a cement truck. Stephen Foster, writer of all the initial "home" songs, was haunted throughout his life by his loss of home. "Old Folks At Home" was his theme song. We are what is known as the "vulnerable elderly" — a category voted most likely to get warehoused during a pandemic.

Every study shows seniors who do best are the ones allowed to age in place in the homes familiar to them. We are both eighty. Why should there be any hurry to destroy our home on the corner of Barrie and Colborne, the last in a row of workers' cottages built in 1840? The cottages will be 200 years old in a few years. What will Kingston be losing when concrete rolls right over the little green space we have been preserving to demonstrate what native plants can do to put more oxygen back into the air, what neighbours can do when we share community, what going slow and reconsidering the developers' demands might do for a future liveable city?

Development or the Public Interest?

The case of the Queen & Barrie Streets proposal

STORY BY JONATHAN ROSE



Aerial view from Colborne Street SOURCE: Lemay; 275 & 283 Queen Street & 364 Barrie Street, Planning Justification Report, Zoning By-law Amendment

There are many arguments both for and against the proposed sixteen-storey building on the corner site stretching from Queen Street to Colborne Street along Barrie. The developer has a clear interest in maximizing the density to create the most profitable parcel of land. Residents may think otherwise and find the height proposal incompatible with the neighbourhood. Kingston, like all cities, has a Planning Department that acts in the public interest to adjudicate these often-competing interests. The stated mission of this essential City department is to ensure that planning and development are carried out “in accordance with sound planning principles in order to protect existing neighbourhoods, manage growth, achieve responsible and sustainable development.”

If the City follows its own policies, the proposed building would not be approved by the planning department. The City’s own process, as well as its responsibility to the public interest, tell us why this project should be turned down. The City’s Official Plan provides the broad parameters for how development should occur, and by-laws provide details about how space in different parts of the city should be used.

The zoning for this site clearly suggests that the proposal is incompatible with the City’s own objectives. The current zoning bylaw does not permit a building of this size at this location. In City Bylaw 96-259, this area is zoned C1-1, indelicately called “Neighbourhood Fringe Commercial.” The current height limit is three storeys, or no higher than forty-two feet high. The proposal is for sixteen storeys that would rise 175 feet – more than four times higher than is permitted by the existing bylaw. Furthermore, the current site density allows for twenty-four units, not the 227 proposed by the developer. In terms of parking, the current bylaw requires twenty-four spaces for twenty-four units. The proposal offers thirty-nine spaces for 227 units, which is less than seventeen percent of the required one space per unit.

Downtown cores evolve, and cities need to take such evolution into account in their planning. This year the City proposed a new zoning bylaw for this area. What is striking is that even in this review, the City has maintained the density on this site at twenty-four units. But it has recognized the need for greater height and makes a reasonable proposal of four storeys on the street, then a further two storeys set back. The new zoning bylaw requires 125 parking spaces (ninety resident spaces plus twelve car share spaces and twenty-two visitor spaces).

The new zoning bylaw, which represents the most up-to-date thinking by the City for this parcel of land, does not allow for the kind of height, density or limited parking envisioned by the developer, all of which massively exceed bylaw requirements. But that is not the end of the process.



While you might conclude that the City would reject the developer’s proposal based on its own bylaws, developers have a way to circumvent this by using a tool called an “urban design study.” Section 10A.4.7 of the city’s Official Plan states:

Notwithstanding the above provision related to height, if a site-specific urban design study, presented to the public, clearly indicates to the satisfaction of the city,

- that a taller building is compatible with the massing of surrounding buildings,
- does not create unacceptable amounts of shadowing,
- and meets the land use compatibility policies of section 2.7 of this Plan,

a greater height within a specified building envelope may be approved (emphasis added).

This “urban design study” is a document prepared by a planner, hired by the developer, to demonstrate that these three criteria have been met in the proposal that violates the city’s bylaw. The developer has submitted an urban design study, but it clearly does not provide evidence to allow the city to violate its own bylaws.

Let’s examine each of these criteria in turn.

First, the building proposed is sixteen storeys. This is not compatible with the massing of the surrounding buildings, which are two or three storeys. If we understand compatibility as a structure that is harmonious, appropriate, or sympathetic to the environment, it is difficult to see how the proposal is in any way compatible.

The second criterion is that the developer must show that their proposal does not create unacceptable amounts of shadowing. The best way to make this case would be for the developer to show the difference between the shadowing created by

a building permitted by current zoning versus the amount of shadow its proposal would create. The study does not provide this information. Instead, it simply asserts that adverse shadowing effects are not anticipated. In fact, the images presented by the urban design study seem to demonstrate that shadowing will be significant. For example, the study shows that in December, shadows are cast over the entire block of Colborne Street north of the site and the entire block of Barrie Street. Curiously, the developer’s report does not show the impact of the building’s shadow through the day, but merely at 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. A careful city planner will clearly extrapolate from these two images that many houses will be in shadow for at least half a day during December, when light is very much needed.

The final criterion that the developer must meet if the Official Plan is to be violated is that the proposal must be compatible with “land uses of differing type and intensity.” The Official Plan goes on to say that any “development ... will be guided by principles ... that respect the quality of existing areas and provide for suitable transition between areas of differing use, sensitivity, urban design treatment, and intensity in order to avoid or mitigate adverse effects.”

The City Plan clearly anticipates the need for a transition space and the problems of placing a sixteen-storey building in a residential neighbourhood. Leaving no doubt as to what compatibility means, it goes on to say that incompatibility would include “visual intrusion that disrupts the streetscape,” “loss of privacy due to intrusive overlook,” “increased level of traffic,” and a lower quality of service because infrastructure is overloaded. There would be significant loss of privacy if this proposal went through; the influx of 227 additional units would have such obvious adverse effects (the additional cars and parking challenges) that it hardly needs to be said.

The developer is clearly in violation of bylaws amended this year that cap the height and density of new buildings. If the developer desires to go beyond them, and in such a significant and dramatic fashion, the developer needs to show how its urban design study fulfills the City’s own criteria for granting an exception to its bylaws. The developer has not done so, and therefore is not justified.

As citizens, we can take comfort that the City has created rules about how development can occur in neighbourhoods such as Skeleton Park. These rules protect the public interest and balance the rights of developers with those of neighbours. The process is very complex. It is difficult, if not impossible, for citizens to be heard. Citizens rely on the planning department to fulfill its professional obligations to ensure the greater good and protect the public interest. If the City adheres to its own planning principles and bylaws, it must reject the proposal as it stands. To do anything else is to make a mockery of its own bylaws and Official Plan.



JONATHAN ROSE is a long-time resident of Skeleton Park. He teaches in the Department of Political Studies at Queen’s.

It's All Green to Me



PUZZLE BY HALEY SARFELD

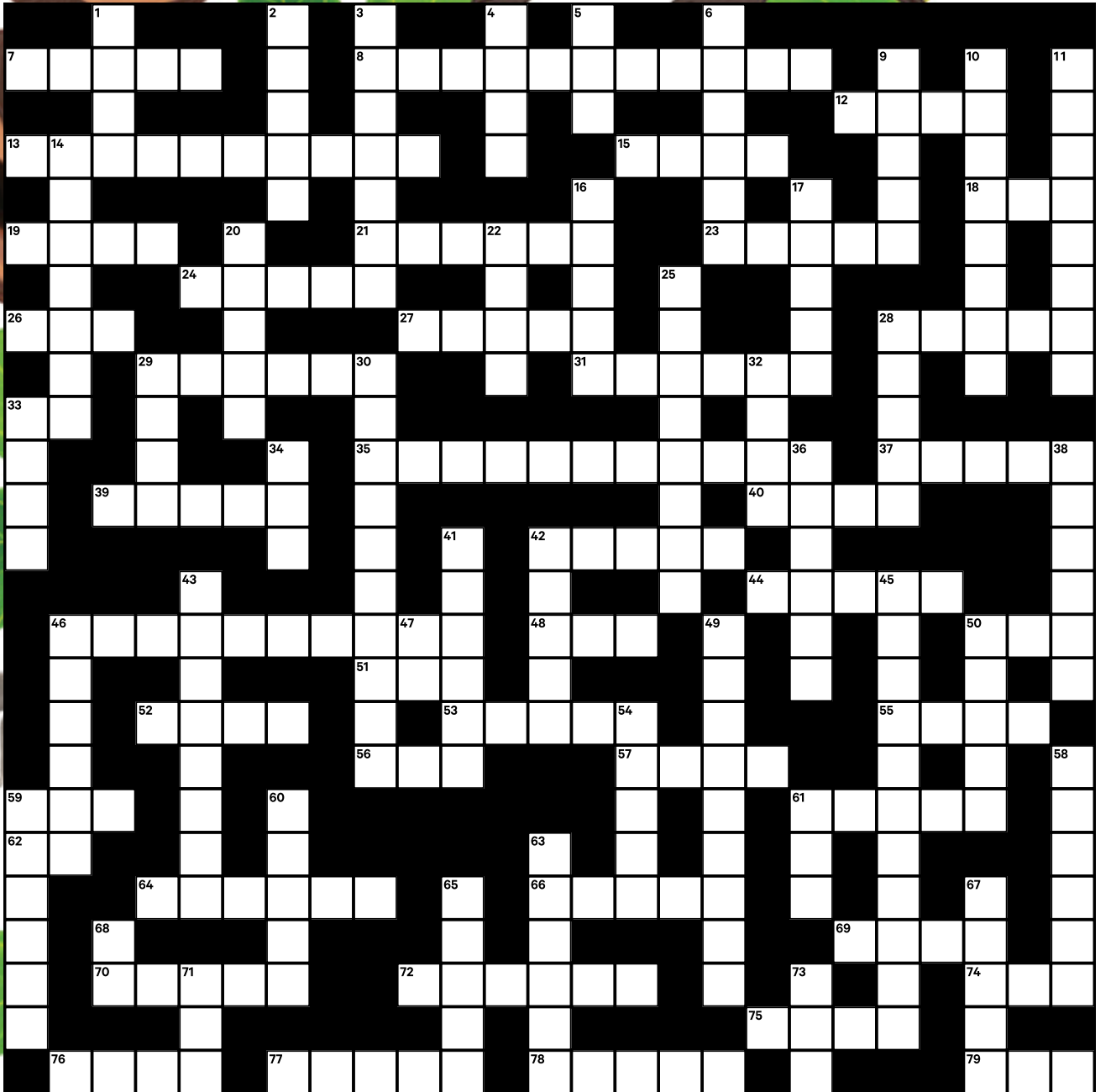
ILLUSTRATION BY JILL GLATT

ACROSS

- 7 Out like a sore thumb
 8 German carol sung as "O Christmas Tree" in English (2 words)
 12 Inhabitant of the Hundred Acre Wood
 13 Another word for hippie
 15 Tolkien's talking tree-like creatures
 18 Pinus resinosa, a.k.a. _____ pine
 19 What the tree does in Shel Silverstein's 1964 children's book
 21 You might yell this when something is going down
 23 When you find a black walnut on the ground and split it open, the inside looks like a pig's _____
 24 If your phone's not on silent, it _____
 26 To cut off a branch
 27 A book or pamphlet, from the Latin word for leaf
 28 Heavy is the head that wears it
 29 Departs
 31 English model born Lesley Hornby
 33 Who am I?
 35 220-year-old oak near River Street
 37 Crimson spice used in Middle Eastern cuisine, also found along the K&P trail
 39 Dense, dark hardwood
 40 What did the willow do?
 42 Kermit says it's not that easy to be
 44 Papery bark
 46 In Macbeth, soldiers use branches from the trees in Birnam Wood as _____
 48 _____-growth forest
 50 A foolish or gullible person
 51 Elongated seed vessel
 52 Kingston Indigenous Languages _____
 53 The bronchial tree distributes air to the _____
 55 Elliptical leaves are shaped like an _____
 56 Forbidden apple-eater
 57 This can mean either adding or removing excess material
 59 One variety shares its first name with a nearby park
 61 Traditional Welsh folk song: The Ash _____
 62 _____apple a day keeps the doctor away
 64 A pirate might say we live in the Inner _____?
 66 Doesn't fall far from the tree
 69 Lump on a tree or plant caused by insects or infection
 70 Sondheim musical, Into the _____
 72 To move awkwardly
 74 Target of emerald borers
 75 Botanical term for the fruit of forest trees or shrubs
 76 Hopefully his bite isn't as bad as this?
 77 Little chips of wood used to insulate soil
 78 Branch offered as a gesture of peace
 79 You might have a bad dream on this street

DOWN

- 1 Sandy _____s Wildlife Centre in Napanee
 2 A beaver makes this out of branches and mud
 3 Little _____ Kingston
 4 Ecological term for a standing dead or dying tree
 5 Poisonous tree with red sap
 6 Joni Mitchell sings about a woman whose heart is full and hollow like a _____ tree
 9 I'm too small to climb this tree! Could you give me a _____?
 10 "Would you like to meet Robin Hood?" "I _____!"
 11 A tree that's younger than a kindergartener
 14 Underground stem that runs horizontally
 16 Character voiced by Vin Diesel in the Marvel Cinematic Universe
 17 Defeats his brother the Oak King on the winter solstice
 20 Fragrant blossoms found at the corner of Patrick and Pine
 22 Obscure synonym for tree trunk
 25 Someone who carves things out of wood
 28 In the Fruit Belt, _____nut Street turns into Carlisle
 29 Going out on a _____
 30 Tapped in March (2 words)
 32 Increased in size
 33 A rolling stone gathers none of this
 34 The outer husk of the black walnut can be used to make this
 36 To reintroduce biodiversity
 38 Enshrouds a bed
 41 Long and silver with one eye
 42 You've gotten taller!
 43 Also known as Manitoba maple
 45 The site of photosynthesis
 46 Group of flowers hanging from a branch
 47 On Division just north of Raglan, _____ GreenBaby
 49 You might see them chasing each other in the trees
 50 The trees in Skeleton Park offer this on a hot day
 54 If you find these clues too difficult, you might be _____ed
 58 Fork, split
 59 This tree shows who's related to whom and how
 60 _____ & Wings
 61 In a sticky situation; up a _____ tree
 63 If you're too naive, you might be easily _____zled
 65 Breakage will result in a fallen cradle
 67 An open space in a forest
 68 What to say when you fall out of a tree?
 71 The future of an acorn
 73 You'll need a spile to do this



Find solutions on page 2

DID YOU KNOW THERE ARE... GORILLAS IN KINGSTON?

WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY COLTON FOX

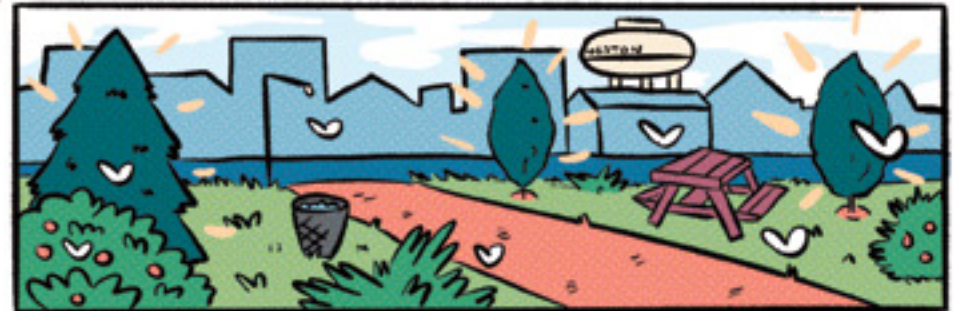
THERE ARE RUMOURS OF GORILLA TREE PLANTERS IN THE CITY OF KINGSTON.



THEY COME TO YOUR LOCAL PARK AT NIGHT...



...AND LEAVE IT CHANGED BY DAYLIGHT!



FACT: A PERSON CONVICTED OF AN OFFENSE UNDER THE "TREE BY-LAW" CAN BE FINED TO A MAXIMUM OF 10,000 DOLLARS FOR EACH DAY THAT THE OFFENSE CONTINUES.



FACT: A GORILLA CANNOT BE CONVICTED BECAUSE APES ARE LAWLESS.

KINGSTON'S GORILLAS ARE RECLUSIVE IN NATURE. LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT THEIR TRUE IDENTITIES AND SOME EVEN DOUBT THEIR EXISTENCE.



BUT EVIDENCE OF THEIR WORK CONTINUES TO FLOURISH.

SO NEXT TIME YOU LIE BENEATH A TREE OR ADMIRE A BLOOMING BUSH YOU CAN THANK YOUR LOCAL GORILLA TREE PLANTERS!



IF YOU WANT TO AID THE GORILLAS IN CREATING A GREENER TOMORROW, TREES ARE BEING OFFERED AT A DISCOUNT TO PROPERTY OWNERS AS PART OF A PLAN TO DOUBLE KINGSTON'S TREE CANOPY BY 2025. ORDERS CAN BE PLACED ONLINE AT CITYOFKINGSTON.CA/NEIGHBOURHOODTREES

The Case for Development, and the Case Against

The Davis Tannery site

STORY BY HARVEY SCHACHTER

In late March, the City's planning committee, based on public concern over a proposed development for the Davis Tannery site, held an unusual third public meeting on the concept. About the only thing proponents and opponents of the development can agree on is that it is complicated, involving the most contaminated site in the city. Indeed, it has become a conundrum for City councillors as they try to balance compact growth within the city boundaries with best environmental practices, particularly as both sides insist their approach is the most sustainable.

The thirteen-hectare site, abandoned for fifty years, previously housed a leather tannery and a lead smelting operation, both of which treated the wetlands as a dumping ground and left legacies of contaminants in the ground. Estimates are that more than half the site has more than 100 times the acceptable level of contaminants, and 600,000 tons of soil will need to be removed or treated on site to be safe. "It bears the toxic legacy of capitalism and colonialism," says Jeremy Milloy, who lives near the site and works on environmental issues for The Providence Centre for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

Four buildings, with about 1,500 residential units housing an estimated 2,100 people and some commercial space, would be built in four stages over ten years, after a couple of years spent remediating the site. This site is also unique because some opponents are calling for the buildings — currently planned for four to eight stories — to be even higher, moved closer to Rideau Street and away from the water. There would be as many parking spaces as units, raising concerns about contributing to congestion and carbon emissions, but developer Jay Patry has promised to have 800 bikes and 300 e-scooters available for rental to residents, and to reserve forty spaces for a car-sharing program his company will oversee.

The buildings would be constructed of wood, the dangers of which were seared into Kingstonians' minds when Patry's The Foundry apartments at Princess and Victoria Streets burned during construction in 2014, and one of the construction crew had to be dramatically rescued from a crane by a helicopter. Latoya Powder, in-house urban planner for Patry Inc., argues wood construction is the best for climate change but there are also strong counter-arguments from the concrete industry. A recent meta-analysis published in the journal *Developments in the Built Environment* found substituting wood for conventional building materials reduces emissions by sixty-nine per cent.

The main benefit of the Tannery project, proponents argue, is new housing in the vicinity of downtown. But critics argue there won't be many, if any, affordable units in the project, and since it is being built over a ten-year period the general housing addition per year is not that high. "For some people, it's enough to increase housing. But it's a rough connection between building general housing

and getting affordable housing," says Rob Hutchison, the councillor for King's Town. Mary Rita Holland, the councillor for Kingscourt-Rideau who co-chaired the City's housing task force, adds: "We need assisted, supportive housing now, built for the precariously-housed by governments and non-profits." But Mayor Bryan Paterson, as an economist, says he believes adding more units keeps the cost of housing from rising even more, thus restraining the costs of affordable housing, which is set at a percentage of prevailing market rates.

Patry would take on the challenges and risks of environmental remediation, which is estimated at nearly \$70 million. But under the Brownfield Community Improvement Plan, the City would assist in the cleaning up of contaminated sites by reducing for ten years the increase in property taxes the developer must pay after enhancing the site by eighty per cent; however, given the high cost of this project, that subsidy has been upped to ninety per cent. "We don't write cheques to the developer. We rebate taxes later," stresses Paul MacLatchy, Environmental Director for the City.

City Council has voted to further assist the development in three ways: by exempting the developer from paying (under the tree bylaw) for replacing trees he will be removing, by exempting him from a community benefits charge to compensate for special density he was allowed, and by foregoing half the normal development charges. In total, that's just over \$50 million in benefits. Hutchison feels that's too much. The City will still need to provide services to the residents and owner once the buildings are up, and the developer is not covering enough of those service costs.

If the project is approved, the developer will work with the provincial Ministry of the Environment to decide how each part of the site will be cleaned. Much of the soil will be dug up and removed to a dump site. Some will be capped, likely with clay placed over contaminated soil and then new soil and grass on top, preventing surface water from running down and animals burrowing into the contaminants. Concerns have been expressed the project is being approved before the exact plan is known, but MacLatchy says the Ministry would oversee everything — along with the project's professional engineer, who can be sued. "There is a good regime of policies and practices in Ontario to handle this kind of clean-up," he says.

The clearcutting of 1,800 trees that have grown up on the site in the past five decades — and, in particular, one majestic, 200-year-old white oak — has sparked the creation of an action group, No Clearcuts in Kingston, to fight the project and more generally push for enhanced tree cover. Kathleen O'Hara, an organizer, says, "The City doesn't see the trees. It only sees the land under the trees. We can't leave the development of the city to the developers, a development-friendly mayor, and a development-friendly staff. They are destroying the fabric of the city."

Trees help in the battle against climate change; they provide shade; they calm winds and prevent flooding; they help to avoid "urban heat islands," which Molloy notes tend to occur in lower income neighbourhoods with fewer trees to promote cooling. The developer and City staff insist, however, the development can't proceed without cleaning up the contaminants, which in turn cannot be done without clearing the trees to get at the soil. The planning committee meeting was told by the developer's team that capping the roots of the oak tree,



ABOUT THE ONLY THING PROPONENTS AND OPPONENTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT CAN AGREE ON IS THAT IT IS COMPLICATED.

with its extensive root system, will suffocate it and removing the soil will kill it. Former city poet laureate Helen Humphreys has risen to the tree's defence with a poem, "White Oak on River Street," that includes these haunting words:

Who are we to mess with what is older
than the grandparents of our grandparents?
Who are we to stop the rain of acorns in October —
the drum and scatter of two hundred years —

The City has a history of planting trees to replace those felled by development, but that program predates climate change and so the intention is to recast it for this era, with Council committing to doubling the tree canopy as a priority. A recent report showed that from 2016 to 2020 about 55,600 trees were planted — about a tenth of that giveaways to rural residents — while 4,500 trees were removed. But O'Hara says that's misleading because trees under six inches in diameter are not being counted "making cuts, especially clearcuts, seem less damaging."

Removing trees returns the stored carbon to the atmosphere, and the ability of these trees to carry out photosynthesis and store more carbon is also lost. Neal Scott, an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography and Planning at Queen's University, estimates removing the tannery trees would return 300 metric tonnes to the atmosphere — about what 300 people driving 20,000 km a year would emit in carbon — and give up seven metric tonnes of carbon-sequestering capacity, or about seven cars. Over time, new replacement trees can store the carbon lost from the tannery trees. The initial accumulation rate, however, is likely slower than the average accumulation rate at the tannery property, so it would take a few years for new trees to reach the same level of carbon storage capacity. Rob Snetsinger, principal at Sydenham-based Ecological Services and a consultant to the project, argues that by building on vacant urban land we avoid the carbon change implications of erecting those homes, most likely individual homes, in rural areas.

Mayor Paterson says we need a bold goal for replacing trees — more than the traditional one-for-one ratio — and should redistribute them widely in the city. Milloy supports the 3-30-300 formula of Little Forest Kingston, a group planting clusters of trees: Everyone should be able to see three trees from their homes; there should be a thirty per cent tree canopy in every neighbourhood; and

everyone should be no more than 300 meters from a quality green space they can enjoy. "I don't know how we can square the circle here," says Hutchison. "Everyone knows we need development. Everyone knows we need to deal with climate change."

Concern has also arisen over the water on and around the site. The developer plans to cap about half the heavily-polluted wetlands but O'Hara says that must be revisited given the increased flooding Canadians are experiencing through climate change, and the fact that with fewer trees the site will be more vulnerable to floods. "The poor people living there may need dikes," she says.

Milloy, who has seen flooding on the site, says wetlands are like shock absorbers: "If we lose them, the water has no place to go and it will go into the buildings." But MacLatchy says given the connection to the inner harbour and Lake Ontario, the site's storage capacity is not significant. While there is reason to be concerned about filling in a wetland, right now the contaminants are going into the river: "It may look nice but it is contaminated and it is a big risk."

Some fear work on the site near the water and a planned dredging in the river by the federal government nearby could stir up and redistribute contaminants, particularly if not coordinated and done well. The project is also seen as a threat to turtles that, after hibernating in Kingston Mills during winter, have chosen the site to bask in the sun, strengthening themselves with vitamin D before laying their eggs. To enhance the Kingston Rowing Club's facilities, a floating boathouse is being built on stilts where that basking takes place. The substitutes proposed — floating logs, or a platform, or some structure under the boathouse — are seen as inadequate by Mary Farrar, president of Friends of the Inner Harbour. "It's the biggest turtle habitat in the city," she says, and the best place for kayaking and observing wildlife. Snetsinger says turtles are an opportunistic species and artificial basking has been done elsewhere: "It's easy to provide basking opportunities." Farrar wants the boathouse eliminated from that spot, the buildings moved further from the water, and a barrier of trees and large rocks to keep people away from the water.

O'Hara argues we are best to leave the site alone and let it heal itself, as has happened elsewhere, while looking to develop the many other vacant sites nearby. Tim Park, Director, Planning Services with the City, sees this as "a once in a lifetime opportunity" to clean up the site. Mayor Paterson would like to break down the perceived tradeoffs people are seeing between the trees and housing:

"These tradeoffs are polarizing and get people drawn to one side or the other." That has already happened, leaving the Council he heads with a giant conundrum.



HARVEY SCHACHTER is a Kingston freelance writer. He writes two columns a week for the Career section of *The Globe and Mail* and a bi-monthly column on civic issues for *Kingston Life* magazine. He is a former editor of *The Kingston Whig-Standard*.



Kingston's Housing Crisis and How We Got Here

Spoiler: lack of supply is not to blame

STORY BY **DOUG YEARWOOD**

ILLUSTRATION BY **FLORIANA EHNINGER-CUERVO**



In the previous edition of *The Skeleton Press* I outlined how, despite lip service, housing in Canada is not treated as a human right.

Instead, for the majority of people who own or rent in the private rental sector, housing is treated as private property that is accessed and sold only by those who are able to afford its market price. Those who live in social housing are typically unable to afford market price and live in rent-geared-to-income housing, but governments have failed to expand this form of housing for decades due to free market ideology and the political and economic power of developers and landlords. This private property and free market fetishism is at the root of the housing crisis, in Kingston and elsewhere.

In this issue I take aim at supply-side arguments on housing, which argue that increased housing supply will cause a natural deflation in housing costs. Supply-oriented arguments about housing crises — favoured by Mayor Bryan Patterson, Premier Doug Ford, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau — are neither new nor convincing.

BACK TO THE FUTURE: WHAT FAILING TO LEARN A LESSON LOOKS LIKE

“There are no houses available of a type to suit working class families. Where houses do become vacant, the rents are so high as to make them prohibitive to working class people. The housing shortage is alarming...”
— Daily British Whig, March 13, 1920

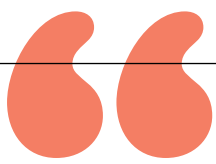
Housing crises of various sorts have existed in Kingston and across the country for more than one hundred years. Then, as now, mainstream voices concerned with housing have argued that a shortage in the housing supply was the principle reason for the crisis.

In the 1930s, working people in Kingston — and across Canada — lived in deplorable housing conditions, and these worsened during the Depression. With pressure from trade unions, socialist political organizations, and progressive religious groups, government authorities and industry groups around the country conducted surveys on the extent of the housing crisis. These reports detailed how many working-class families were living in decrepit living conditions. Overcrowding, a lack of maintenance and utilities, and pest infestation were common. (Little has changed. We still have a huge bed bug and pest problem in Kingston and elsewhere, many landlords are negligent and fail to fulfill their maintenance duties, and people are paying far more than they can afford for inadequate, cramped housing.)

In 1935, the government of R.B. Bennett struck a special committee to deal with the housing crisis. This committee featured Labour, Tory, and Liberal Members of Parliament, who heard from housing experts and urban planners from across the country. The committee argued for a national housing strategy to be implemented to construct low-interest housing at prices affordable to low-income workers, but this was rejected by Bennett. Instead, the prime minister turned to former Queen's University professor W.C. Clark, an economist and real estate financier, who advised against any progressive measures and favoured using housing to stimulate private investment.

In late 1935, with Clark having influenced the policy direction of the government, Bennett introduced the *Dominion Housing Act* (DHA), a series of market-based proposals made by a group of large lending institutions. The proposed solutions did little to resolve the housing problem.

The situation is similar today. Housing experts such as Canada's Leilani Farha, who is a former UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, housing organizations such as the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations in Toronto, and the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, along with activists possessing deep knowledge of the crisis have all been largely ignored at federal, provincial, and local levels. Meanwhile, governments court the opinions and perspectives of developers and lobby groups, and policy ends up favouring private interests.



Real solutions would provide funds and land for social, rent-gearred-to-income housing that is clean, pest-free, and adequate for families to live and thrive in.

THE CRISIS TODAY—HOW DID WE GET HERE, EXACTLY?

The situation of the 1930s offers us insight into the way modern “solutions” to the housing crisis are conceived. Unfortunately, ideas embraced by the government remain dominated by supply-side arguments, leading to continued suburbanization, an indebted workforce, poorly maintained private and social rental housing, and the construction of multi-unit residential complexes with astronomical rents. The housing crisis has been made possible at different levels of government, each of which has contributed to the crisis since the mid-’90s.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

During the recession of the 1990s, the federal government took the decision to limit and eventually cut funding for social housing entirely, passing responsibility on to provincial governments.

While the federal government would later introduce new programs, such as the National Homelessness Initiative and the Affordable Housing Initiative, these plans diverged from earlier iterations of housing policy in that they provided developers with funds to introduce cheap housing. These programs had some success, but they did not respond to the gap created by the federal government’s abdication from social housing responsibility. Homelessness and rents have soared ever since.

The National Housing Strategy (NHS), introduced in 2017, has yet to yield any major results. This program consists of various funding streams, most of which focus on increasing supply by providing funds — sometimes contingent on cost-matching by provinces and municipalities — to various initiatives via low-cost loans and grants. While there are initiatives that support the production of social and cooperative housing, the bulk of the funds appear to be flowing to private coffers. As a senior economist for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives recently noted, “The NHS has been more successful at delivering big headline numbers than in producing actual housing.”

The federal government has also promoted home ownership by easing mortgage restrictions and lowering interest rates. While home ownership is popular in Canada — in part because of the perceived security of tenure — there is another side of this policy that is rarely discussed: debt.

The shift to home ownership coincided with working class Canadians taking on more debt than previous generations. While many have benefitted from home ownership, if the housing bubble ever pops, or if a deep recession hits, debt could become a problem for millions of people. A few months into the pandemic, CBC News reported that more than 750,000 people deferred mortgage payments. The Bank of Canada is primed to increase interest rates over the next year, meaning homeowners will have more strain on their pocketbooks. With debt-to-household-income ratios already nearing 180 per cent and sub-prime mortgage markets growing, the long-term viability of home ownership for cash-strapped workers is questionable.

Homes are marketed as assets, which people are encouraged to desire through demand management strategies such as advertising and government-sponsored home buying policies. The general shift towards the market economy has led to unequal wealth distribution across Canada and has made people’s futures even more attached to the fate of capital than they were previously.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

The Ontario provincial government has also played a role in incentivizing home ownership, but it has played an even bigger role in contributing to the crisis in private and social rental housing, beginning with Mike Harris’ Tory government.

Harris focused on getting government out of “the housing business” and sought to restructure housing to benefit landlords and developers, all under the auspices of reducing red tape to increase supply.

Harris also gutted rent controls and made it easier for landlords to evict tenants through a series of legislative changes. With the dubiously named Tenant Protection Act, the Conservatives tweaked rules around above-guideline rent

hikes, implemented a fast-track system to evict tenants, and embraced vacancy decontrol — allowing landlords to increase rents to whatever price the market could bear once a tenant left a unit.

No provincial government since has reversed the course of the path charted by Harris’s Tories. Successive Liberal governments failed to introduce policies that changed these basic market-driven dynamics, though Wynne’s Liberal government did introduce some rent-control provisions (and even this legislation contained loopholes that allowed landlords to increase rents beyond what would otherwise be allowed if they did renovations or if a tenant moved out). When Wynne left office, close to half of all tenants in Ontario lived in unaffordable housing, spending well over thirty per cent of their monthly income on rent.

Doug Ford has gone even further to benefit landlords and developers. In the midst of the pandemic, Ford’s government passed Bill 184, which activists dubbed the “eviction bill.” In part, this was because it changed rental repayment rules to allow landlords to bypass the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) and apply for immediate eviction should a tenant default on an agreement.

Ford’s government also announced the launch of a More Homes, More Choice plan in 2019, believing that streamlining local planning and introducing measures to allow home owners to create secondary suites on their property would boost supply and tackle affordability.

Recently, Ford’s housing affordability task force endorsed a series of supply-driven mandates they believe will make housing more affordable. But the past thirty years have shown that supply-driven schemes do not combat housing affordability, instead benefitting those who own private property.

THE MAYOR’S TASK FORCE ON HOUSING

“But deeper than that is an affordable housing crisis – an affordability mismatch – wherein households in the lowest income quintile are suffering a chronic shortage of supply, and end up paying too much of their income for shelter, settling for inadequate shelter...”

— The Mayor’s Task Force on Housing, 2020.

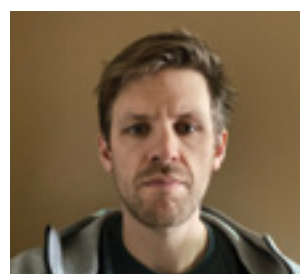
In Kingston alone, more than eleven thousand people own more than one property. This tells us that the crisis is, in one way, superficial: there is more than enough housing to satisfy need, but private ownership prevents people from resolving housing problems in socially useful ways. Mansions and multiple houses owned by the rich could be repurposed to resolve any real housing shortage, but the deeply ingrained individualism and worship of private property that is pervasive in our society tells us that it is ridiculous to think of such things.

The Mayor’s Task Force on Housing — which was full of developers — echoes the perspective advanced in the 1930s, suggesting that the housing crisis is simple: it’s all about supply. This argument is a red herring, one that conveniently ignores all sorts of power dynamics and that obfuscates the real problems about how housing is produced and consumed. The housing affordability crisis does not stem from a lack of supply, but from private ownership schemes, the lack of positive state intervention, and the disproportionate power held by developers and landlords. Questions of ownership, market inflation, and the social relationship between those who own, lend, and construct on one side with those who struggle with rent and with mortgage payments on the other — as well as those who suffer from negligent ownership — are unaddressed.

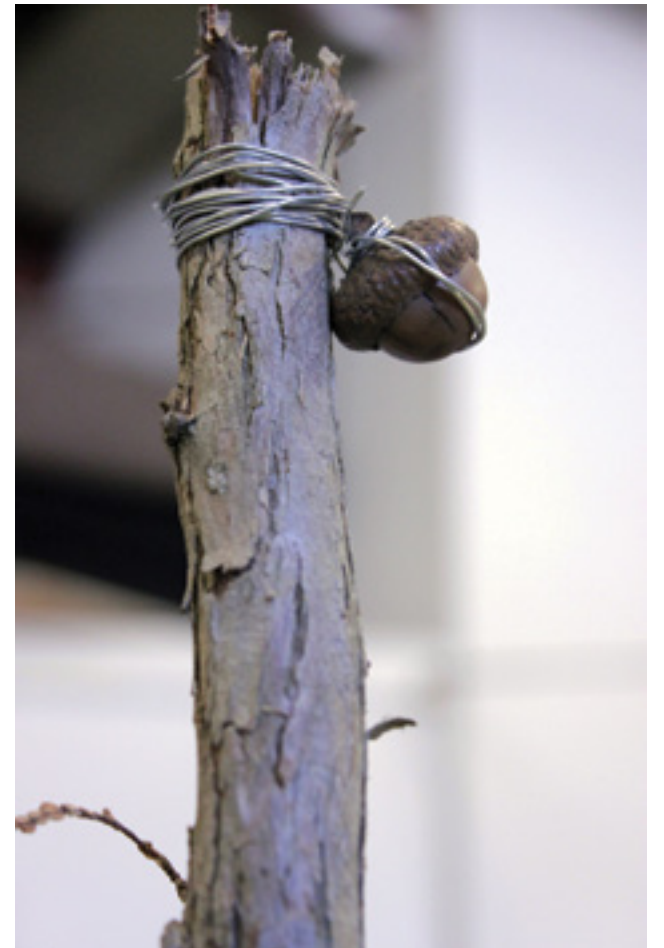
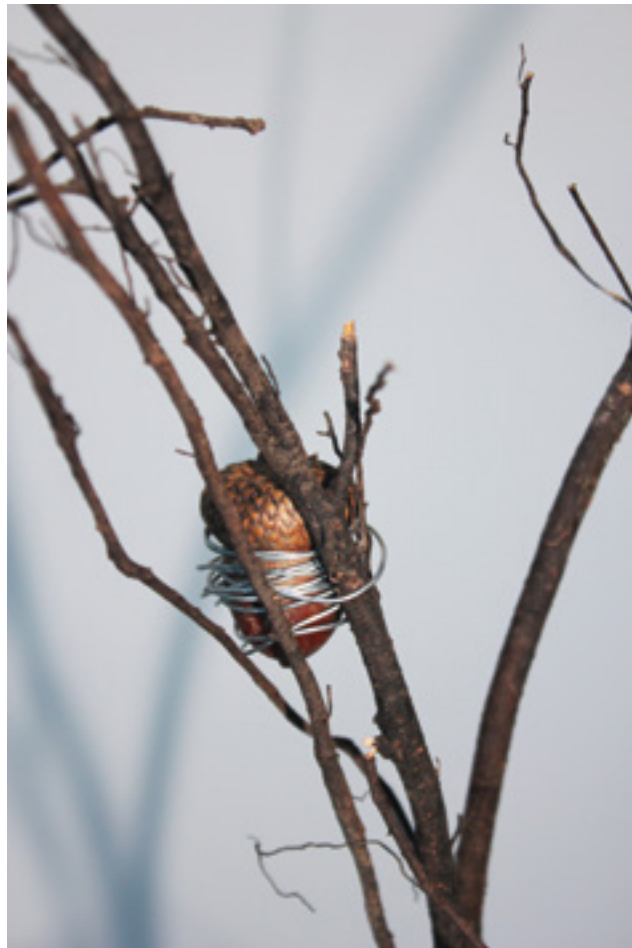
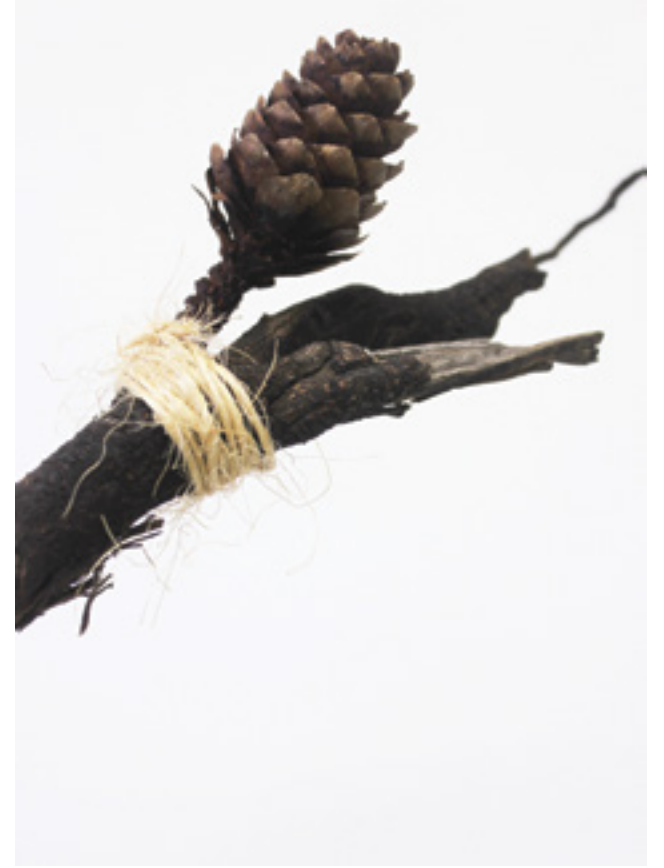
Real solutions would at least acknowledge effective demand, which can be understood as need backed by an ability to pay. Real solutions would also grapple with the power asymmetries found in the housing market, holding negligent landlords to account for their abuse of tenants’ housing rights. Real solutions would provide funds and land for social, rent-gearred-to-income housing that is clean, pest-free, and adequate for families to live and thrive in.

People might be more convinced that the Mayor cared about housing affordability if they saw City staff push for social and cooperative housing funding from the federal government through the National Housing Co-investment Fund or the Rapid Housing Initiative. They would be more likely to believe the Mayor if the City had intervened when the Kingston and Frontenac Housing Corporation started to rent out apartments at unaffordable market prices.

For those in power politically and economically, the housing crisis is nothing more than a nuisance. Solutions to the housing crisis exist, but it will take a serious independent and working-class movement to resolve it.



DOUG YEARWOOD is a PhD candidate and Teaching Fellow in the Department of Political Studies at Queen’s University. His research focuses on urban planning, gentrification, and other aspects of Canada’s housing crisis. Doug is also one of the founding members of the Katarokwi (Kingston) Union of Tenants.

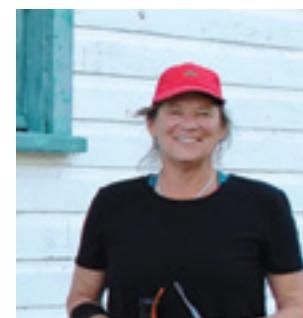


STATEMENT

Jocelyn Purdie's work includes sculpture, photography, and installation, and is driven by her interest in landscape and ecology; human relationships to the environment; and the way the natural world is imagined within that context. Her interdisciplinary practice allows her to consider different perspectives on the ideas that she explores in her work.

ABOUT THE WORK

This series of photographs, *Nature FIXED*, are details taken from my sculpture series, *Tree FIXED*, a set of reassembled trees made from found tree parts that are hinged together with steel brackets. Dioramas, science experiments, interventions by animals and humans, and hybrid life forms are incorporated throughout the work. By dramatically increasing the scale of the subjects in these photographs, I evoke the beauty and power of the natural forms, revealing a resiliency despite the evidence of human intervention.



JOCELYN PURDIE is a Kingston-based artist and curator. She has shown her work in public and private galleries and in public art projects locally and extra-regionally since the mid-1980s. Recent exhibitions include: *Next Door 2020*, Skeleton Park Arts Festival, Agnes Jamieson Gallery, Minden, ON, Modern Fuel Artist Run Centre, and the Agnes Etherington Art Centre in Kingston, ON. She is the curator of the Swamp Ward Window Project, an alternative venue for contemporary art in the community, and was a member of xcurated, a curatorial collective formed in Kingston 2011. Over the years she has been active on the Board of Directors of the Modern Fuel Artist Run Centre, the Arts Advisory Committee, and the Public Art Working Group of the City of Kingston, and is the former director of the Union Gallery at Queen's University.



Reimagining Our Communities, Securing Our Future

A case for medium-density development

STORY BY ANDREW MACLEAN / ILLUSTRATION BY HAYDEN MAYNARD



If City officials are correct, Kingston may no longer be recognizable thirty years from now. While the effects of climate change are already being felt, projections for what's to come should be cause for alarm. Predictions given by the City expect that by 2050 the average temperature in Kingston will have increased by four degrees, the number of days above thirty degrees will increase annually from six to nearly fifty, while extreme weather such as storms and lightning strikes are also expected to increase in frequency. This is a pivotal moment in the climate crisis and one that requires ambitious action to minimize the worst impacts.

ANDREW MACLEAN is a doctoral student in the Department of Political Studies at Queen's University. He has long been interested in technology and civic engagement, and presently his research has turned to why the CRTC keeps his cellphone bill so high.

Leadership on climate action has become an important facet of municipal politics in Kingston. The Kingston Climate Action Plan in 2014 trumpeted the city's commitment to climate action by targeting a thirty percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Following this, in 2019 Kingston became the first municipality in Ontario to recognize the climate emergency, a move meant to encourage a strategic response to mitigate emissions and promote sustainable alternatives for the community.

Perhaps the most ambitious step the City has taken towards combatting climate change occurred late last year with the adoption of the Climate Leadership Plan (CLP). The plan highlights strategies and infrastructure goals that are intended to make Kingston carbon neutral by 2040. To meet this objective, the CLP maps out nine goals promoting the development of carbon neutral communities, with a tenth goal focusing on improving resilience in the face of climate change.

Net-zero carbon denotes actions directed at minimizing the consumption and emission of carbon both through building-design strategies and on-site renewable energy generation. To achieve net-zero means reaching a balance between emissions produced and the volume of emissions captured. Net-zero is an ambitious but necessary goal, requiring collective actions both in the short and long-term.

Realizing net-zero carbon ultimately requires a collective reimagining of urban environments. As outlined in the CLP, residential buildings in

Kingston, particularly single-dwelling residences, account for more than forty percent of the community's carbon emissions. Furthermore, low-density housing promotes urban sprawl which necessitates the need for automobiles: more than eighty percent of residents use cars as their primary mode of transportation. Tackling urban sprawl, reducing automobile dependence, increasing greenery, and promoting sustainable building practices are each vital for meeting net-zero goals.

The CLP applies a climate lens to all future development in the city. While much has changed since the North King's Town (NKT) redevelopment was first announced in 2015, change can present opportunities for the development of zero-carbon communities that both preserve and energize the surrounding natural, social, and economic environment of the region.

To transform the NKT redevelopment into a zero-carbon community means adopting sustainable design principles, notably increasing the amount of medium-density development such as low-rise apartments and multi-unit houses, mixing in commercial spaces meant to service local communities thereby reducing car dependence, and developing green public spaces for residents to enjoy. Couple this with improving access to public transit and increasing the availability of electric charging stations and the result is more sustainable communities with lower carbon footprints.

The benefits of medium-density communities are not exclusive to climate goals either. Medium-density development is a better and more efficient use of urban space and can be an important step towards offsetting housing shortages and affordability concerns. Low-density housing stretches out important municipal resources such as education and waste management. Medium-density housing, on the other hand, generates more tax revenue and therefore can improve services. Finally, medium-density development can support extensions of vital public transit services, which can further reduce demands for automobiles.

While some may suggest high-density towers as another potential avenue to meeting the city's climate goals, such developments pale in comparison to medium-density alternatives, particularly when viewed through a climate lens. First, medium-density development utilizes low-carbon supplies such as lumber, while high-rise buildings require steel and cement — both recognized by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development as heavily polluting products. Second, high-density developments can cause over-crowding, greatly increase waste production, and place additional strain on city services. Finally, medium-density development can be more easily integrated within the community and doesn't threaten to disrupt the city's skyline. As such, medium-density development can harmonize with its surroundings far better than high-density alternatives.

New developments are not the only method to reduce our carbon footprint. If we are serious about countering climate change, then retrofitting existing buildings is also crucial. Better insulation, new efficient windows, more energy efficient appliances, and installing solar panels are just some ways residents can retrofit their homes to pursue net-zero targets. Together, retrofitting and sound development can create more balanced and healthier communities.

There are net benefits in pursuing net-zero communities. If the CLP provides a roadmap to a net-zero future, perhaps the North King's Town project can act as a canvas to begin realizing that vision.

This Tree, That Tree

Some for climbing on, one for hiding in

STORY AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY **LUKA**

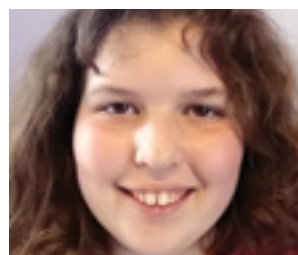


← This tree is located on the corner of Patrick Street and Quebec Street, in front of St. John the Apostle Church. It has proved too dense and spiky for climbing. However, the inside of it is like a cave because there are hardly any branches. You can enter through a gap in the outer branches on the north side. The layer of outer boughs forms a thick wall, and it is a wonderful shelter. If you stand in a certain spot, no one can see you through the gap that serves as a door. Be very careful, though, because often there is sharp stuff, such as needles, in this interior space. Other than that, it is a cool place.

→ This tree is located at the corner of Rideau Street and North Street, across the road from the east side of Riverview Park. It is an amazing climbing tree. You can brace yourself between the many trunks at its base and hoist yourself up, or you can just climb up using the footholds. Once you are out of the base, there is a branch that extends up and outward. It then forks into two, and this fork is a perfect place to sit. There are even branches a few feet above the main climbing branch that you can climb on, or hold onto when you are climbing into the perch. In the summer, the tree's luscious foliage surrounds you, making it hard for people to see in, but easy to see out. Altogether, it is a pretty nice place to hang out.



← This tree is located on Markland Street on the south side of the Mulberry Waldorf School. It is a good climbing tree; however it is quite small and the branches are thin. There are two at the bottom that are in the perfect position for doing flips and little stunts, or just for hanging upside down. When you are at the top of the tree, you are very hard to see unless you are wearing very bright clothing. This tree also creates a small nook between it and the brick wall of the school. It can be a fine hiding spot if you stay low, quiet, and still. This tree is the perfect size for little kids to have fun on and enjoy.



LUKA lives close to Skeleton Park and loves animals, swimming, and tropical rainforests.

Your neighbourhood is a forest: A field guide to social ecology

STORY BY **RON SHORE** / ILLUSTRATION BY **CHANTAL ROUSSEAU**

The health of a neighbourhood, like any constellation of lives, is a story of interconnection and deep mutual interdependence.

It's not so much what you think you see, but what you don't see
That matters.

The how of seeing.

The air between us is full.
It is not nothing, it is not empty.

Trees know this, are nourished by this,
Grow up by this.

And while our photosynthesis days may be
over

our serotonin still catches the light,
warms in the sun,

flourishes in the dance
with others.

There is always exchange, always gifts
that bind.

Beneath,
the roots and mycelia entangle,
enjoin,
engender and weave

making it difficult to see
where one tree begins and the other
ends.

What is "self"?

The snags which fell are pools of life
And loss becomes presence
and promise.

What is "death"?

Beneath and between — what we cannot see
but upon which, we all depend

Is the sharing, the deep wells of life, the hidden messengers
Shuttling along the fibres

Inside the web, the intelligence works.

Beyond us, but so, so much
Inside us.

We know certain things matter when it comes to health. It's a curious word, belonging, that captures all at once a sense of wonder, fit, and value. We simply do better when we feel as if we fit into something larger than our sense of separate self alone.

Equity matters. A forest shares, knowing that the health of one is inseparable from the health of others. Balance is sacred, with each held in relation to other. Resources are shared and the concept of private property is laughable.



Ecology, the study of being home, is a study of relations and intersections. And of rhythms, of cycles and seasons, of coming-and-going. What do we take from the earth, from our neighbours and from ourselves? And what do we give?

A great challenge facing us today is to see ourselves as interconnected beings living and breathing in an interdependent relation with the world. I'm convinced that improving our mental health and that of our communities starts with us healing our relationship to the natural world. We have become disconnected.

Contact with nature has been shown to help reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. Being in nature helps with our mood and with our memory. Being in touch with nature increases pleasure, and our sense of meaning. It promotes vitality and self-esteem, and leads to greater feelings of joy, happiness, and curiosity.

You are of this forest. You are of the trees. What you give and take affects others, and conditions your future. Can we learn to live as a part of a large whole? And how would that change us?

Your neighbourhood is a forest
Your neighbour is a tree.
Is who they are, because us.

Walk in the woods, walk down the street
And notice the buds birthing,
Notice the songs sung

The fluttering of wings on human bodies
The sound of breath from soft mouths
reaching, and receiving.



RON SHORE lives with his family among the trees of the Kingscourt neighbourhood.

Whereas the Oak of the Tannery Lands Remembers the Nesting Passenger Pigeons

(all phrases below are from the City of Kingston Tree By-Law)

Site alteration means activities.

The injury or destruction of a tree, of an ash tree, the operation of an existing cemetery or golf course.

Person means a corporation.

With clearly visible marks of orange paint prior to the commencement of any injury or destruction.

Clear cutting means the removal of all trees.

Each stump remaining after cutting trees located within a proposed road allowance.

Dead tree means a tree that has no living tissue.

The value of any tree that is injured in order to lawfully establish and operate or enlarge any mine.

Tree means any species of woody perennial plant.

Including its root system, including lightning, wind, hail, including without limitation.

SADIQA DE MEIJER

Easter on the Salish Sea

Soles cut numb in clamshell shallows.
Turn shoreward: sheer to the zenith,
steeps of old growth are razored
clean to soil, a stubble of umber.

And the last colossus, shorn
to limbless, barkless lumber,
floats like a gangland corpse
face down in shorewater,

shrinking, as dead things do
in Ovidian dreams, as if such mythic
worlds could cease, as if
this were a dream.

STEVEN HEIGHTON

The late Steven Heighton had requested that the following note be added after his poem: "This poem is from Selected Poems 1983-2020 (House of Anansi Press, 2021) and is reprinted with permission of the author."

Rooted

Shambled hum of the canopy working a rhythm.
I do not have the same ambition as the earth,
my hair breaks like branch ends, the sky dulls,
a robin's voice peals against the sides of homes.
This tree is no longer young, crooked and
a hollow worn into the bole, slow to foliate.

Marrow-boned clouds oscillate above the tree, as
afternoon lilts into the murk of another evening.
Each ring, each collision with the sky a bite
in the horizon line.

ASHLEY-ELIZABETH BEST

little hungers

tell the apple blossoms to stop blooming
they are too beautiful for the old alley
the dollar store shoppers walk down

tell the robins to stop singing
about all the little bugs and raindrops
collecting in the leaves

tell the hundred bees to stop humming
over the ultraviolet glow
before giving up the ghost

tell the apples to stop falling
they are too sweet for the pavement
where the tires squish and the wasps swarm
where the plastic swirls and the people
worship their bags of chips
behind the golden arches

Oh apple tree
you were always too good for us
even poetry doesn't deserve you

LORI AUSTEN

a tree in a forest

a lone tree standing
on the side of a large hill
ruggedly reluctantly
remembering the others
once

remembering five years ago
in a morning just like all the rest
coming then mid-day
first the rushing of a powerful wind
and then an impossible heat

a tree learning that day
new words in its language
fire forest fire

a tree remembering how that raged
until all the others were gone
it left standing in a smoky haze
with but the wound and scar
of 2 blackened bottom branches

lost the leaves off those that year
and again the next four
does not yet fully understand
they will never grow back

and here it stands feeling
lucky and lost
but waking today to a morning
in its mild dewy breeze

this new morning of forgiving sun
here the fourth spring after
this tree watching and upon waking
seeing on this expanse
of short grass and wildflowers
hundreds of new tree
seedlings and saplings
glistening on a hill

with then a hill remembering
itself again

BRUCE KAUFFMAN

Skeleton Park

Give us leaves
before we go

but let us hear
if we're around the sound
of leaves while we're here

and also let us rest under
leaf-shade once we leave.

JASON HEROUX

SADIQA DE MEIJER lives in the McBurney Park neighbourhood. Her latest book of poetry is *The Outer Wards*.

The late **STEVEN HEIGHTON** had gratefully lived and written hereabouts for more than thirty years.

ASHLEY-ELIZABETH BEST is a disabled poet and essayist from Kingston.

LORI AUSTEN is a writer, artist, and nature lover living in Kingston.

BRUCE KAUFFMAN is a Kingston poet, editor, event organizer, and workshop facilitator.

JASON HEROUX is the current Poet Laureate for the city of Kingston.

Inside the John Street Forge

Local blacksmith finds community support

STORY BY ERIN JONES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BERNARD CLARK



During breaks between feedings and nap time, Skeleton Park blacksmith Stuart Themens and his eleven-month-old son, Wesley, take me on a walking tour of the neighbourhood to see the commissioned metal work he's made for neighbours.

The former construction worker — now carpenter — has always been drawn to working with his hands. Raised on Dog Lake in South Frontenac, Themens moved back to Kingston with his wife Heather after studying at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay. Working out of his old apartment on Compton Street, Themens would bring home scraps left over from job sites and use them to make jewellery.

“I started forging copper in the apartment because all you need is a little desk,” explains Themens. “I was making chainmail, small finer stuff and that led to my interest in blacksmithing — it's kind of just like the bigger version of jewellery making.”

In 2014, the couple bought their first home on John Street. With more space and a creative curiosity, Themens began experimenting with large-scale metal work with the help of YouTube and a silversmithing course at the Kingston Lapidary and Mineral Club.

“When we moved to John Street, I started just out of the garden shed. I started really small and just built things over time and expanded to this eventually,” says Themens, showing me his newly finished workshop, outfitted with a power hammer and multiple forging stations.

Before moving to the area, Themens says he never imagined he would be surrounded by other creatives



BLACKSMITHING IS VERY FOCUSED, YOU HAVE TO REALLY PAY A LOT OF ATTENTION

and makers eager to support a hobby turned side business. On our walk, neighbours invite us in to look at some of the work Themens has done for them. You might have even stopped to admire the beloved poetry board he made for a friend on John Street.

“You can get away with cool stuff [in the neighbourhood], like building a blacksmith shop. People actually support it and come to you for work,” says Themens, laughing.

In 2020, Themens grew tired of working construction in the winters and was looking for a career change. He attended the Haliburton School of Art and Design (HSAD) Artist Blacksmith program at Fleming College, studying under local steel sculptor Stefan Duerst, Themens' personal inspiration.

“I figured I really need to invest in putting the time in and actually show respect to the craft and recognize that you do need to go to school for it. It's not all intuitive or something you can teach yourself,” says Themens.

Drawn to “flowery, over the top” design, Themens is inspired by the Rococo architecture and decoration style originating in France in the 18th century, a style characterised by its asymmetry and curving natural forms. Themens works mainly with recycled steel from Kimco Steel Sales in Kingston. Using tools he forged himself, he might make a gate or a hand-rail, which can take days and sometimes weeks of work — from the sketching and design to the intricately forged leaf metalwork.

“Blacksmithing is very focused; you have to really pay a lot of attention,” says Themens. “There are a lot of steps in making the flowers and you have to do things in an martial arts way. Your movement can't be erratic; you have to be very controlled.”

Themens has been taking on fewer commissioned pieces while he's on parental leave. Finishing up his apprenticeship with the Kingston Carpenters Union, he has plans to combine his passions for woodworking and blacksmithing. He's most looking forward to expanding his structural metal art portfolio, with aspirations for a gallery showing of his own in the future. For more information and to see his latest creations, you can check out Themens' Instagram: @johnst.forge.

ERIN JONES is a freelance writer and library worker. When she's not typing and reading, you can find her making things with yarn and watching terrible reality TV with her cat.



The Art of Positive Troublemaking: How to Make a Creative Impact

REVIEW BY AARA MACAULEY

The Creative Instigator's Handbook: A DIY Guide to Making Social Change Through Art. By Leanne Prain. Vancouver, BC: Arsenal Pulp Press. 2022. 272 pp. \$27.95 paperback. ISBN: 9781551528755.

“
THERE IS NO ONE PATH TO BECOMING A CREATIVE HUMAN. CREATIVE STYLE BLENDS PERSONAL TASTE, ACQUIRED SKILL SETS, GIVEN OR FOUND TALENT, AND YOUR UNIQUE MISSION.

***The Creative Instigator's Handbook* was born of the COVID-19 pandemic, and understandably so. For many people, the time spent at home – whether off work, recouping from hours in Zoom meetings or classrooms, or resting after a day as an essential worker – has been filled with long moments of introspection and a heightened awareness of social, political, racial, and environmental issues. In navigating these, many of us have found new meaning and comfort in the arts. In a variety of ways, books, films, TV shows, and creative crafts help us to facilitate our understanding of the world and how we process our values and experiences.**

As I have been planning the Kingston WritersFest's 2022 festival, three themes have come to the forefront: giving voice to the facets of our identity; taking action on the many issues that came to light during the pandemic; and underlining the importance of mental health. These topics lend themselves well to artistic interpretation, including craft and art activism, or “craftivism.”

The relevance of art-making to the current state of the world is why I was excited to read Prain's new book. Prain is probably best known for co-writing *Yarn Bombing: The Art of Crochet and Knit Graffiti* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2009). Anyone who walked through Skeleton Park a few years ago witnessed examples of this art firsthand, as the cannon at the front of the park, some benches and tree trunks were decked out in colourful knits. Locally, acts of craftivism are embodied in the mini lending libraries that pepper our neighbourhood with tempting second-hand reads.

The Creative Instigator's Handbook is an excellent and welcoming guide on how to collaborate, create, and choose the issues and artistic media that move you. One of the core lessons that Prain imparts is that you don't need to be a seasoned activist or professional artist to make an impact in your community. “There is no one path to becoming a creative human,” she writes. “Creative style blends personal taste, acquired skill sets, given or found talent, and your unique mission.” The book presents twenty-four case studies of projects carried out by artists and collectives across the world. Some are epic, others are simple, but in her interviews with the creators it is clear that whether a dozen or thousands of people participated, the impact for audience and creator was profound. Prain offers creative challenges to get the reader excited. An example: “If your artistic practice was a song/ texture/ colour/ slogan/ shape, what would it be?” If you are more of a visual learner, the large format book is filled with lots of full-colour pictures of the works discussed. Where the projects are ongoing, she also offers information on how to get involved.

Prain also addresses important topics such as understanding privilege, navigating differences of perspective, doing research, dreaming big, and dealing with things beyond one's control. All in all, this is a book that could find a place on any creative's shelf, whether to be used as a step-by-step guide, a flip-through motivator, or simply as a reminder of the artistic energy present in the world.

You can see **Leanne Prain** at **Kingston WritersFest** this Fall.



AARA MACAULEY is the Artistic Director for Kingston WritersFest. For four years she owned and operated Get Funky Boutique, selling primarily local, Canadian, and independently created art, clothing, and jewelry. Macauley performs and has been involved in the fundraising, event planning, and promotion committees for various local cabaret, film, and arts festivals. She is past Chairperson on the Reelout Arts Project Board of Directors, and currently sits on the City of Kingston Arts Advisory Committee, the Art in Public Places Working Group, and the steering committee for the Canadian Association of Literary Festivals.

Look Up

Why our urban forests matter

STORY AND ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN WRIGHT

The importance of street trees and the urban forest has shifted over the past decade, initially because of devastating losses of street trees to invasive species such as the emerald ash borer, but more recently in response to climate change.

Trees were a key element of Kingston's civic design through to the mid-1900s, as witnessed by the huge, eighty-year-old surviving trees in older neighbourhoods such as Sydenham Ward and Skeleton Park. However, by the 1960s city planning and particularly engineering of city streets moved away from placemaking to a mechanistic paradigm that regarded the city as a machine and streets as conduits, pipes below and cars on the surface. Streets were designed as functional corridors with secondary regard for pedestrians or social interaction. Trees were considered decorative elements, "nice to have" but not essential. Air conditioning also diminished the importance of tree-canopy shade for comfort inside buildings. Urban trees became a frill, with city efforts more focused on removal or limbing individual trees around wires rather than the broader health and management of the urban forest as a comprehensive system.

In the course of my career as a landscape architect and planner, the knowledge and practice of growing trees in urban conditions have vastly improved. When I started out in the 1980s, best practice for most urban projects was very architectural in approach, focusing on defining space, providing opportunities for social interaction, and creating memorable character. There was little or no awareness of invasive species or the suitability of native plants, let alone local gene stock.

The importance of providing suitable volumes of un-compacted, healthy soil and the positive effect of overlapping tree roots only emerged in this millennium. Following the recent eradication of the stately American elms that so defined Ontario main streets until the 1960s, the standard approach was to choose one species to give continuity to several blocks of street or even urban plazas, with little attention to soil volume or quality. You can see the legacy of poor planting practices in the stunted growth of twenty- and thirty-year-old trees in the islands of any large, commercial parking lot.

I spent decades as the only landscape architect on teams of engineers, advocating for pedestrians, cyclists, and trees on major municipal projects, and espousing social interaction and placemaking as key aspects in livable communities. Typically, this was not considered very important and trees were treated as an afterthought. I searched for planting opportunities between services and was informed that watering new trees was not in maintenance budgets. Livability and examples from the finest cities in the world never seemed to count for much in those discussions, even with the support of Business Improvement Areas and stakeholder groups.

What brought change has been the positioning of the urban forest as "green infrastructure," a concept that could be measured and costed. With increasing awareness, politicians began to insist on and fund more substantive approaches to planting. It's long been known that trees capture carbon, but as climate change brings increasingly hotter summers, a major contribution of the urban forest is shade. Typically, dense urban areas are considerably hotter than the surrounding countryside because of the dark, heat-retaining pavements and roofs; temperatures can be reduced considerably with shade provided by mature canopy trees. The evapotranspiration of large trees also helps with cooling, and reduces the impact of storm water run-off as summer rain events become more severe and frequent. These green infrastructural benefits can be measured, and often demonstrate significant cost savings over engineered solutions.

Quantification of these functional benefits supports the role of the urban forest. For example, a mature tree captures forty-seven tonnes of carbon per year, and can remove 190 kilograms of particulates from the air, while also reducing levels of carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide. Shade can also increase the life span of asphalt and roofs by 20 percent. Planting alongside streets has a measurable traffic-calming effect, and if trees are between the sidewalk and the roadway they provide a much more comfortable pedestrian experience. Even more helpful in advocating for the urban





forest is the conversion of these benefits into dollars through the use of programs like i-Tree Eco, developed by the United States Forest Service, so that the cost benefit can be compared and integrated with other engineering infrastructures.

Some jurisdictions now are insisting on minimum volumes of uncompacted soil, and are calling for a review of appropriate species or, better yet, performance standards setting out the size of canopy within ten years of planting. Several Ontario cities have set targets for percentage of tree canopy and are working with private property owners to plant trees within blocks and on remnant portions of lots. London, Ontario, has the goal of twenty-five-percent coverage by 2035, increasing to thirty-two percent by 2065. This policy, in addition to creating public boulevards and parklands, is educating property owners and providing incentives for planting on private lands.

The cities leading the way in dealing with climate change have prioritized their urban forests. Not coincidentally, these are also some of the most livable cities and desirable destinations in the world.

Paris, France, for example, is aggressively planting important public lands, radically changing the grounds of major historic spaces such the Louvre by creating small forests. Inner-city parking lanes are also being converted to planted boulevards with bike lanes. The banks of the Seine are being enhanced with trees, both for shade and rainwater management in the form of linear urban parks. Tellingly, these initiatives are politically led, with the program planner reporting directly to the mayor.

Melbourne, Australia, is another example. This sprawling, low-density suburban city of five million people has a strategy to accommodate a doubling of its population within its urban boundary by intensifying 7.5 percent of urban lands such as along existing transportation corridors and activity nodes that will protect existing neighbourhoods, while preserving and increasing tree canopy cover.

An example particularly relevant to Kingston is the Spanish city of Vitoria-Gasteiz, a beautiful city of a quarter million people with a historic core that was awarded the title of European Green Capital in 2012. The mayor, a former minister of the environment, championed the methodical improvement of its pedestrian and cycling connectivity by linking parks with cycling corridors and restoring former underground drainage pipes as naturalized open watercourses. Most citizens walk or cycle to work or school, making the tree-lined streets and stream-side paths both expedient and recreational.



JOHN WRIGHT is a registered planner and landscape architect whose focus is urban design and public places. His art installations at the Elm Café and, last fall, on the pathway close to the Old Woolen Mill, may be known to neighbourhood residents. He lives in the Inner Harbour neighbourhood.

Similarly, Victoria, British Columbia, has improved its urban forest by treating it as a tangible asset that is woven into not only its parks and open-space planning, but also its transportation corridor, with planted medians separating bike lanes from vehicular traffic within existing road corridors. Recognizing that only a quarter of Victoria's urban forest is on city-owned land, the city has found ways to educate and incentivize other public and private landowners to enhance the remaining 75 percent of its tree canopy.

While all these cities have prioritized their urban forests in ameliorating climate change and biodiversity, the main take-away in their approaches is the integration of city planning and infrastructure design, rather than treating the planting of additional trees as a stand-alone objective. These cities have made trees an integral element in their ambition to create pedestrian-scale, "fifteen-minute" neighbourhoods (ones where basic needs are all a short walk away), right through to ensuring budget and best practices for planting in development projects as well as transportation and other city projects.

To bring all this back to the Inner Harbour and Skeleton Park neighbourhood, it's worth asking what residents can do to improve our urban forest. One obvious measure is for property owners to plant trees. The magnificent, huge sugar maples that remain are at the end of their lifespan and many or most have already been removed. Replacing missing trees in front yards will enhance our streets, but the major opportunity is in the rear yards, the interior of the blocks where there is sufficient soil and space to allow canopy trees to reach mature size.

Additionally, we can encourage our local politicians to update the 2011 Urban Forest Management Plan. It's time to evaluate progress and add such performance goals as percentage canopy, allot adequate budget to the City Forestry program, and integrate tree care and planting into all city initiatives, including facilities, parks, and transportation projects. There are numerous opportunities to add trees to road corridors and storm-water ponds, such as those along John Counter Boulevard. Elsewhere in our neighbourhood, there are many city-owned residual pockets, such as Hillside Park, Megaffin Park, and Rideau Street Parkette, as well as provincially owned parcels such as the Provincial Courthouse property. Together, these urban spaces could support viable patches of forest. Hopefully, too, with citizen encouragement, significant planting can be incorporated in impending redevelopment projects such as the Tannery Lands. By shifting attitudes from trees as aesthetic frill to cost-effective climate change infrastructure, we can ensure that street trees become a major part of the eventual redevelopment of the light industrial lands along Montreal Street.

The good news is that planting trees is relatively inexpensive as a component of city infrastructure. In addition to ameliorating climate change, a healthy urban forest would improve the quality of life in our neighbourhood and city.

The Pride of Kingston

Kingston pride day celebrates thirty years of recognition

STORY BY **MARK RICHARDSON**

2019 Pride (Kingston Pride's 30th anniversary)
PHOTO CREDIT: Mary Ann Wamboldt Photography



This June marks thirty years since the City of Kingston proclaimed its first Pride Day, on June 20, 1992. However, the history of Kingston's Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and other sexual minorities (2SLGBTQIA*) long pre-dates this milestone. Before Pride Day, a revolving number of gay and gay-friendly bars and sites existed in open and closed spaces. Queer community groups, such as the Queen's Homophile Association (now the Education on Queer Issues Project, or EQUiP, founded in 1973), were supportive spaces for lesbian and gay people. As we celebrate three decades of Pride Day, we also celebrate the movement towards equality for 2SLGBTQIA* peoples in Kingston and surrounding areas.

Kingston Pride was established in 1989 as a grassroots organization working to promote awareness and inclusion of the 2SLGBTQIA* community. At its outset, the organization focused on making space where there wasn't one already, certainly not one supported by Kingston community members at large. While dealing with open hostility and death threats during gay peace demonstrations, and with City Council rejecting the first request for a Lesbian and Gay Pride Day in 1985, Kingston Pride began as a testament to our community's right to exist. After 1989, the

Kingston Pride parade, and ultimately the Kingston Pride Festival, continued to grow and make more space, especially for individuals identifying as lesbian and gay. Today, the focus of Pride is turning to make sure all members of the 2SLGBTQIA* community are included. This involves considering intersections of identity and creating more spaces that make queer individuals feel welcomed and safe. Through these efforts, Pride is gaining more participants and more community support, with a notable endorsement in 1992 from then mayor Helen Cooper. Today, Kingston celebrates the diversity of the queer community in Kingston and surrounding areas, supporting and showing up for programs such as ReelOut and Pride, and passing an early ban on conversion therapy. Kingston Pride coordinates a wide range of activities for the Pride Festival and supports flourishing queer community groups in running their own programs.

The past two years have been difficult for everyone in Kingston, including the queer community. While the 2020 Kingston Pride Festival was limited to an online platform, it brought people together at a time when finding connection was so difficult. The online platform facilitated new ways to engage with the Kingston queer community, including online story time, drag shows, and a video pride parade. In 2021, Kingston Pride brought Pride to September; for the first time engaging with post-secondary students who have typically left Kingston at the end of spring term. The 2021 Pride Festival was inspiring, with the Kingston queer community finally able to release their pent-up energy to celebrate. A fantastic week-long festival re-energized the Kingston queer community, indeed encouraging three new people to join the Kingston Pride board, with hopes for an even more dynamic future for 2SLGBTQIA* people in the city. Pride continues to show that the time is ripe to further grow the queer presence in the Kingston area, and Kingston Pride aims to help make this a reality.

Community Resources

Queer Kingstonians and allies alike, if you would like to get involved with Kingston Pride, you can become a member at kingstonpride.ca, and reach out to us on Facebook at facebook.com/PrideKingston to help out with Pride planning and volunteering.

2SLGBTQIA+ RESOURCES IN OUR COMMUNITY

- FUSE Youth Group: [f](#)
- K-Town Youth Pride: [f](#)
- EQuIP: [f](#)
- Sexual Health Resources Centre: shrckingston.org
- HARS: hars.ca
- Transgender Health Care: kchc.ca/weller-avenue/transgender-health-care
- TransFamily Kingston: transfamilykingston.com
- Coming Out Living After: comingoutlivingafter.yolasite.com
- Out/In Kingston: outin.ca
- Beers for Queers: [f](#)
- Reelout Queer Film Festival: reelout.com



“ KINGSTON PRIDE CONTINUES TO SHOW THAT THE TIME IS RIPE TO FURTHER GROW THE QUEER PRESENCE IN KINGSTON.”

Now, this year the Kingston Pride Festival approaches once again, back in its usual time slot from June 9 to 19. We welcome students to come back to the city, so they can once again bring their energy and passion to the festivities. This year we have another week of exciting events lined up. These are slated to include*:

- Saturday, June 11: Drag Storytime, and Pride Run/Walk
- Sunday, June 12: Queens and Queers Baseball and Beers
- Tuesday, June 14: Trivia Night with Tacos
- Wednesday, June 15: Board Game Night
- Thursday, June 16: Queer Movie in the Square
- Friday, June 17: All Ages Dance Party & Drag Show, and UNDRwear Dance Party
- Saturday, June 18: Kingston Pride Parade & Community Fair, Ramesha Drums & Joyful Joyful, presented by Kingston Pride & SPAF at Skeleton Park, Out on the Queen boat cruise, and Beers for Queers.
- Sunday, June 19: Katarokwi Indigenous Art & Food Market, and Pride Hangover Brunch with special Drag Performer

Find a full and up-to-date list at kingstonpride.ca/2022.

Pride continues to be an important opportunity for sexually, romantically, and gender-diverse members of our community to stand and march collectively, and in one voice remind Kingston that we are here. And through this action, we make space where queer and questioning individuals can see themselves in our community, know they belong, and accept that Kingston can be a safer place for them. Pride gives us the opportunity to be willingly visible in our community; to celebrate in and show the world our diversity; to give thanks to those before us who have campaigned for our rights; and to give voice to our ongoing quest for equality. Many within the queer community in Kingston still live in fear of discrimination. Kingston Pride is our opportunity to confront those fears as a collective, to celebrate the diversity within our community, and to be out and proud to ourselves and those around us. Through Pride we also find opportunities to continue the education and growth of the broader Kingston community overall. But most importantly, Pride is an opportunity to come together, to make new friendships and connections, and above all, to have a good time.



MARK RICHARDSON is a settler here on the Katarokwi, an organizer for the Queen's University Association for Queer Employees, an astronomer and science educator at the McDonald Institute at Queen's, and the Communications Officer for Kingston Pride. Mark and his husband moved to Kingston in August, 2018, and they love the amazing opportunities and beauty this land has to offer. Mark is passionate about building opportunities, resources, and advocacy for and by the Kingston queer community.

TOP: 2019 Pride (Kingston Pride's 30th anniversary)
PHOTO CREDIT: Elizabeth Wainwright Struthers

BOTTOM: 2021 Pride
PHOTO CREDIT: Andi Wilder



Protecting Yesterday's Trees While Planting Tomorrow's

How Kingston's by-laws affect our standing "families"

STORY AND ILLUSTRATION BY TAYLOR TYE

“
WHAT IS THE CITY DOING TO SOLVE THE THINNING TREE CANOPY IN KINGSTON?”

In Kingston, we are blessed with a beautiful waterfront, large, centuries-old trees, and diverse marshland ecosystems — all within walking distance of downtown. However, it's easy to take these beautiful natural elements for granted. Beneath our basements lie the root systems of thousands of trees removed to make room for our buildings, leaving us with blocks of pavement and few trees in sight. In 2015, the City of Kingston agreed to double its urban tree canopy as remediation for this increasingly paved paradise. Are we close to meeting this goal? Is anything being done to protect the heritage trees still standing?

According to Forests Ontario, a heritage tree is one that is “associated with a historic person or event, or [grows] on historically significant land.” A tree's prominence within the surrounding community – for example, its use as a landmark – is also taken into account, but it's “the historical or cultural significance of the tree that is of most importance.” The 200-year-old Grandmother Oak that has stood the test of time and toxins on the former Davis Tannery lands, therefore, could qualify as a heritage tree.

Forests Ontario further explains that “Heritage Tree candidates are also assessed for form, shape, beauty, age, size, rarity, genetic constitution, and other distinctive features.” These characteristics expand the criteria and lend room for more trees, such as the old maple on Main Street, that have added beauty to the neighbourhood for more than a century.

Any tree that falls under these criteria can be added to the Kingston Heritage Tree Program (HTP) through a submission by any member of the public. On Sept. 7, 2021, City Council passed a motion that, according to Heritage Services director Jennifer Campbell, “encourages interested community members to submit trees for inclusion in the Ontario Tree Program so that their history, social, ecological and community value can be commemorated and shared.”

However, addition to the HTP does not entirely protect a tree from threats of removal by property owners or developers. “Designation has not been used for this purpose in

Kingston and there are at present no guiding policies that would facilitate an assessment of value or merit for any tree's specific designations,” explains Campbell. “With any designation under the Ontario Heritage Act, Council retains the authority to both allow alterations that impact the designation criteria as well as the power to repeal the designation by-law in future. Also of note, designations are subject to appeal by the property owner and the public through an established and legislated process.”

In other words, if a developer or property owner wishes to remove a tree, no matter its designation, age, or size, they may do so by paying a fee to the city based on the circumference of the trunk. And if that circumference is less than fifteen centimetres, a developer may remove the tree with no further steps or permissions from the City.

Councillor Lisa Osanic feels that “there's really no way that the city can force the developer to build around the trees. The developer just takes [cutting down trees] as being a cost of doing business, and will pay the penalty.” She points out that there has been some improvement in recent decades, though not much. Before the introduction of the tree by-laws in 2007, says Osanic, “a developer could develop a piece of property and cut down every tree on the lot, and it was within their right to do so.”

In the case of the condominium development on the tannery lands proposed by Jay Patry, approximately 1,800 mature trees (that is, trees greater than 15 cm in diameter) would be slated for removal, including the Grandmother Oak that has been here since European settlement. The thirteen-hectare property was left polluted by more than a century of industrial smelting and seventy years of tannery operations, which, along with uncontrolled filling, created what is arguably, according to a City report, “the largest and most contaminated brownfield property within the city of Kingston.”

As part of the Tree Removal Permit process, once trees are taken down by a developer, it is usually required that new trees be planted to replace them – either by the developer or with monies received by the City for reforestation.

This covers the tree canopy on paper, but it takes years or even decades for new saplings to grow to the full, beneficial size of the removed trees. “We could plant a row of trees here, there, and everywhere in the same neighborhood,” says Councillor Peter Stroud, “then it's net zero. We haven't really ruined the environment for this, we've just moved the tree somewhere else. A lot of issues can be replaced by new things.” However, he says, “that's not the case for this Grandmother Oak or for lots of other trees.”

The environmental repercussions of removing mature trees and replacing them with saplings include such things

as lack of shade, which manifests in higher energy consumption as buildings use more air conditioning in the summer months; disturbed habitats for tree-dwelling animals such as birds and squirrels; less pollution absorption — a particular issue for the tannery lands, as the trees there have been processing the toxins in the soil for decades; and less carbon and oxygen processing.

“Trees and wetlands do a lot more than carbon sequestration,” explains Rosemary Thoms of No Clearcuts Kingston. “They also help prevent flooding and are important habitat and food sources for wildlife, which are increasingly at risk. Studies also show that access to nature and to trees and green spaces have important physical, spiritual, and mental health benefits.”

It’s no secret that trees provide dozens of health benefits to us humans, our animal friends, and the planet in general. So why do we keep cutting them down and paving over their root systems and replacing their branches with buildings? And what is the City doing to solve the thinning tree canopy in Kingston?

In 2015, Sydenham district Councillor Peter Stroud suggested during a Strategic Planning meeting that efforts be made to double the tree canopy by 2025. Not enough has been done since then. “Here we are seven years later,” he says, “with only three to go before 2025. It doesn’t look like we will reach the doubling goal, though we did in fact greatly increase our tree-planting numbers.”

The Tree Information Report released on February 15 of this year surveyed all the developments in Kingston in the past three years, and reported that the city has seen a net gain of approximately ten trees a year. Councillor Osanic points out that while this is a gain of sorts, the number is “a little bit misleading, because those are only the trees that were greater than fifteen centimetres. So obviously we have had a net loss of trees.”

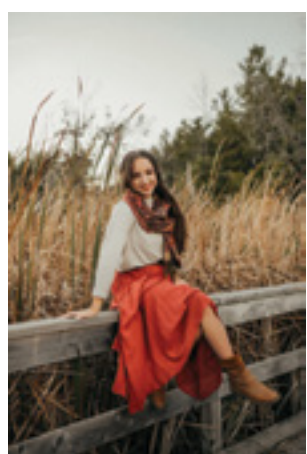
If the stated goal of the city is to double the tree canopy by 2035, a net gain of ten trees a year puts us far behind that target.

In attempts to speed up the process of tree (re)population, Kingston introduced the tree planting program. This offers property owners within the city an opportunity to purchase trees for a discounted rate to plant on their private property. Ten different native species are available for pickup at \$10 for a coniferous tree or \$17 dollars for a deciduous variety. LeafKingston is available to help those who may need assistance selecting, planting, or delivering the trees. Trees are available to purchase from March 1 until April 1, and again from July 4 to August 4 – in both cases until supplies run out.

This is a wonderful incentive to get the community involved in the expansion of our tree canopy. However, standing in the way is another barrier, especially in the Skeleton Park neighbourhood where a large proportion of residents are renters and would not qualify as property owners. Tenants would need permission from their landlord to plant a tree.

So, what can we do to help protect our heritage trees, our standing “families,” and to ensure the chance at life for many, many new trees? Keep advocating for them. Keep putting pressure on City Council for their protection and planting. Join advocacy groups such as No Clearcuts Kingston. And above all, thank a tree for all that it does and will do in its cycle of life and beyond.

On that note, here is a poem written by Grandmother Laurel Claus-Johnson in appreciation of the 200-year-old Grandmother Oak on River Street.



TAYLOR TYE is a Kingstonian with roots in these soils dating back more than eight generations. She is a freshman journalist with *The Kingstonist*, a beadwork artist and owner of Jackpine Designs, and a lover of these lands.



Se:kon Grandmother Oak,

It is with loving, thankful thoughts I bring you to my mind.
The majesty in your task of remediating the earth surrounding you is glorious.
You have done such a commendable job.
I admire you.
The impressive task of healing the soil deserves praise.
I personally wish I could lean up against you and hug you;
absorbing some of your physical energy would be a blessing.
I trust your protective nature and instincts without reservation.

We as humans, who gathered to acknowledge your magnificence, are fully aware and proudly supportive of your role. We speak out on behalf of all life forms that have benefited from your presence for the last 220 years.

You have remediated and reversed historic environmental damage done in your vicinity.
You have begun the process of correcting this error.
We acknowledge your dedication and immense capacity.
You have cleaned up and put a stop to further such happenings.
Those toxic elements have sunk down into Mother Earth as designed.
This natural evidence is underway and will continue as intentional, needed and tailored.
Your impact influences the kindness featured in humanity.
As a supreme remediator correcting a fault, you are outstanding.

Local little creatures, animals, birds, insects, all life forms share the joy of your existence.
Migratory wildlife is welcomed back to the safety of your station.
Medicine plants, baby and juvenile trees, the grasses and human children absorb your protection.
Your lifestyle lies with the best interests of the young.

I’m inspired to call you a peacekeeper; a diplomat of creation.
Gifted to all as a champion and guardian of life.
The Standing Family has an ultimate purpose from creation itself.

A Ribbon of Life, the living edge of where land, water and air meet,
is within your root system.
You significantly contribute to the overall health of our water system.
The stability of the shoreline is enhanced by your presence.
You are essential.

I wonder what you would possibly say to us as we lean forward in adoration;
As we reach out to assure you of your value we are prevented from putting our hands on your bark.
I suspect you would silently nod your limbs, give welcome shade on a hot day,
wave your new yearly leaves at everyone in greetings.
You will continue to produce precious oxygen for us all.

Why is it so difficult to get to you now?
Where did that brand new fencing come from? Who paid for it? Why is it there?
What is it for?

I pray for dignity for you to fulfil your destiny of supporting life.

Ske:nne

LAUREL CLAUS JOHNSON
GRANDMOTHER



Local Food Resiliency Is Critical

Take part in making Kingston food secure

STORY BY NICK LAAN

Twelve years ago, my wife and I moved into a house in the Skelton Park neighbourhood. We had been in an apartment nearby for a handful of years and really wanted to stay in this community. While in the apartment I had started to experience a need to better connect with nature. I filled every windowsill in that apartment with plants and tried to get into a community garden. The garden was full but the contacts there set me up with a group of people who were trying to start a new community garden. That project turned into what is now known as the Oak Street Community Garden.

The veggie patch was great but now with a small yard at our own house there was room to go even further. We started by attacking the small strips of grass crammed in between our house and the sidewalk. Over time, grass and a juniper bush transformed into asparagus, wildflowers, and a strawberry patch.

The new yard attracted a lot of attention. A guy walking by grabbed a flower to hand to his girlfriend. My neighbour encouraged me to apply to Communities in Bloom. People would occasionally grab a strawberry to eat. Construction workers putting in a new sidewalk informed me that I had wild asparagus growing in my front yard. One woman started collecting all the ripe strawberries each morning. I struck a deal with her: if she would leave the rest for me, I would propagate the plants so she could start a patch in her own yard. She agreed and a few months later came to collect the plants to start her own gardening adventure.

After this success I decided to take it one step further. The front yard had one patch of grass left and I was going to put in a fruit tree. I took a weekend grafting course and came home with my very own grafted pear tree. It was the size of a pencil and looked like a misplaced twig in my tiny front yard. A ten-year-old boy in the neighbourhood asked what I was doing when I put it in and

I explained. He thought this was the funniest concept: that this small stick would turn into a pear tree. I remember telling him that it would take ten years to grow fruit and him telling me that was basically forever.

As time went on, I became fascinated with the concept of a food forest. A food forest is a diverse array of trees, shrubs, roots, and vines all planted together to mimic a natural ecosystem while providing a diversity of food. I built a mini-food-forest in my small backyard with kiwis, mulberries, apples, peaches, grapes, and even a few chickens.

At this point, I had experienced amazing community connections at Oak Street Community Garden, and by simply meeting with people enjoying my small front yard. I was also growing more concerned with the fragility of our local food system. While I was enjoying my personal endeavours, I wanted to help others connect with our food system in a similar way and begin building greater community resiliency. I was interested in starting an orchard or food forest at the community garden. This proved to be very challenging at the time because community gardens were low on the radar at city hall. There was no person in charge of gardens and no one knew where to get permission, so things filtered to City lawyers where red tape ground everything to a halt.

I took a step back and found a group of interested people. We set up booths at Seedy Saturday (a seed swap and sale traditionally held mid-March), held presentations, and signed up friends and neighbours. We talked with our local City councillors, and had lots of organizational help from Loving Spoonful. Eventually the City gave us permission to start orchards that are run much like a community garden.

All this lobbying and enthusiasm led to the formation of two food forests in Kingston. The Oak Street Food Forest is located at Oak Street Community Garden near Victoria Street and Oak Street. The Lakeside Community Garden Food Forest is located at Days Road and Front Road behind the Centre 70 Arena.

The Oak Street Food Forest was first planted in the fall of 2019. Our goals for the project are to bring community together and increase local food resiliency. We had no idea when we planted that food security and supply chain dependability were soon going to be on top of peoples' minds.

Members of the food forest sign up to take care of a tree and some of its surrounding shrubs. We work together to learn and grow in the space. So far we have only harvested a few handfuls of pears, peaches, and berries but as our forest grows, we expect that harvest to grow. When our harvests increase, we will let members keep one third of the harvest. We will encourage community members walking by and enjoying the space to harvest the next third. The plan for the final third is to donate it to local food security organizations.

Loving Spoonful is one of these organizations that is more than willing to collect excess harvest. They will accept your donations and distribute it to people and organizations who will put it to good use. They even form gleaning groups that go out and harvest excess food of all kinds. If you want to start growing

something but are worried about having too much harvest or simply want to help harvest other peoples' excess, their gleaning program can help. Last year, Loving Spoonful's volunteer gleaners harvested more than five thousand pounds of fruit (mostly apples and pears) from urban homeowners.

The current space at Oak Street Food Forest is small but we are already planning the next expansion. We envision a day where projects like this are integrated into neighbourhood planning. Imagine going for a walk along city streets or through a park and plucking a snack from a fruit-laden tree along the way.

The Lakeside Community Garden Food Forest operates in a similar fashion to the Oak Street Food Forest. Last summer, they added to the initial forest a new project called a little forest, along with an edible hedgerow. This summer, they have plans to create a natural forest playground.

These are some of the formal food projects forming in the city but there is also a world of food hiding right in front of us all over Kingston. During the pandemic, my kids and I bought a foraging book and started to see what we could find in the neighbourhood. We have been feasting on chokecherries, black walnuts, hickories, mulberries, and service berries. The experience has been a lot of fun. I have also experienced the thrill of seeing normally fussy eaters fighting over tart pieces of chokecherry fruit leather. Last summer I trimmed from my mulberry tree a few branches, as they were getting too close to the house. My kids panicked thinking I was taking the whole tree down and about to destroy the source of their favourite treats.

If you are interested and want to start collecting fruit, I would recommend service berries, also known as Saskatoon berries. They are planted in parks all over downtown and taste like a delicious mix of blueberries and almonds. Keep an eye out for them ripening late June to early July.

The community engagement of the Skeleton Park neighbourhood and the pedestrian-friendly layout are what keep me here. I often wonder what the neighbourhood was like a hundred years ago, and whether or not those people knew they were building something that would last. I call on you to imagine a future where people walking through this neighbourhood are picking fruit in front yards, in city parks, and along other public rights of way. I hope the people here a century from now look back on us and think that we had great visions for community, local food sustainability, and climate justice.

How can you help make this vision a reality? Join or start a Community Food Forest, plant something in your yard for you and the community. Put pressure on local politicians to make food access in public spaces the norm. Many are on board already but some just need a little extra push.

It has been roughly ten years since I planted that pencil-sized pear tree in my front yard and I now have a monster of a tree. I have had three years of abundant harvest — so many pears that I had to give away buckets to neighbours and then do some preserving. That ten-year-old boy moved half-way around the world a number of years ago, but I love to imagine what he might say if he came back and saw what that little stick turned into.

I CALL ON YOU TO IMAGINE A FUTURE WHERE PEOPLE WALKING THROUGH THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD ARE PICKING FRUIT IN FRONT YARDS, IN CITY PARKS, AND ALONG OTHER PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY.



If you are interested in getting involved in any of the projects at Lakeside Community Garden,

visit lakesidecommunitygarden.org/edible-forest-garden/ to learn more.

If you have a fruit tree and want to share your harvest, please contact gleaning@lovingspoonful.org.

If you are interested in being part of the Oak Street Food Forest, visit oakstreetgarden.wordpress.com/food-forest/ or send an email to oakstreetfoodforest@gmail.com.



NICK LAAN is a Skeleton Park neighbourhood resident, and a member of both the Oak Street Community Garden and the Oak Street Food Forest. He is currently a stay-at-home Dad supporting his wife (who has been busy battling the COVID-19 pandemic) and two amazing young children.

OPPOSITE: Emmeline and Adrian Laan harvesting their front-yard crop of Asian Pears and looking out for neighbours to share with.
ABOVE: Nick Laan in his Mulberry tree trying to harvest more delicious berries for his kids.



Yellow Bike Action Aims to Refurbish, Revamp, Recycle

Their mission: to see more kids on bikes!

STORY BY **MONIQUE LEE-VASELL**

Recall, if you can, the first time you rode a bike. That feeling of weightlessness on top of the fear. The space to freely manoeuvre this modular machine. The sensation of a new skill acquired. A monumental moment.

For some, this moment is but a fantasy. The demand for bikes, particularly in low-income and new-resident communities, is pressing. As I write this, the temperature has climbed to a pleasurable fourteen degrees. Activity is shifting from indoors to outdoors, and more people are out on their bikes! But there are many others who have only limited access to bikes. Some people do not have the means to purchase new ones for themselves or their children; others periodically need larger bikes as they grow out of their smaller ones.

Yellow Bike Action aims to solve these issues by offering affordable refurbished bikes, parts, and maintenance, and recycling children's bikes for redistribution to those in need. Yellow Bike Action is a non-profit organization that has for more than twenty-three years been working to break down the financial barriers to bike ownership and maintenance. Their program, Children's Bikes for At-risk Youth, aims to get donated bikes back out into neighbourhoods.

Sophia Kudriavstev and Michael Pomery, board members at Yellow Bike Action, are passionate about making cycling accessible to all members of the community. Their mission: to see more kids on bikes. They believe that riding a bike is a pinnacle of childhood development, one of the first feelings of true independence and autonomy. That achievement fosters self-reliance and community, and can be a healthy outlet, especially for youth in adverse living situations. For some, riding a bike is one of the only means of exploring the world around them.

While the City of Kingston offers dockless bike-rental programs, the bikes are not accessible to all members of the community. These programs require downloadable apps and fees for renting, which may be difficult for young people and those living in low-income neighbourhoods. Kudriavstev and Pomery acknowledge that purchasing new bikes – typically between \$90 and \$200 – can be very expensive for families. For this reason, they run their program by donation, allowing families to give what they can. The folks over at Yellow Bike Action strive to help as many people as possible, regardless of economic status or social position.

Their project works on a volunteer and donation basis, allowing the funds they acquire to be put towards Yellow Bike's day-to-day operations, such as keeping a necessary array of bike tools, maintenance, and marketing, while reducing the cost of bikes for recipients. Additionally, Yellow Bike's need for volunteers is approaching with the summer season. Along with connecting to members of the community, they offer opportunities for cyclists to learn new skills, spend time outside, and repair some bikes.

Yellow Bike Action is currently based at the Kingston Memorial Centre, where they house their refurbished and donated bikes in the Ness Horse Barn. This program is an integral part of the community: the skills they share are strengthened as families return to replace their children's outgrown bikes. These skills mature as they do. A program such as this uplifts these young cyclists, giving them lifelong tools should they continue to use cycling as their primary means of transportation.

Along with recycling used bikes, Yellow Bike Action offers support to people who need to identify problems with their own bikes while providing tools to maintain them safely. This fosters an inclusive and constantly-evolving environment that spreads awareness about bike repairs and cycling culture as both recreational and functional.



“BY REFURBISHING KIDS’ BIKES, NOT ONLY ARE WE DIVERTING WASTE FROM LANDFILLS, BUT WE ARE ALSO STRETCHING THE LIFE OF THESE BIKES SO THEY CAN BE USED AGAIN AND AGAIN.” SOPHIA KUDRIAVSTEV

Since the pandemic began, the demand for bikes and bike parts has risen exponentially. Consequently, there is this paradox: bike parts going into landfills while cyclists are eliminating their carbon footprint.

“We see our work as an integral part of a cyclical anti-capitalist economy,” Kudriavstev says. “By refurbishing kids’ bikes, not only are we diverting waste from landfills, but we are also stretching the life of these bikes so they can be used again and again.”

The very foundation of this organization – refurbishing and recycling bikes – reduces the number of cars on the road and the number of used parts in the junkyard. As a whole, Yellow Bike Action plays an integral role in contributing to Kingston's cycling culture, reducing our overall waste, and sustaining the life cycle of these bikes.



MONIQUE LEE-VASELL is a writer, poet, dancer, and all-around artist. She is currently at Queen's completing her Bachelor of Arts in English Literature. Following her degree, she plans to pursue her MA in Literature in the UK.



After the Turn — in Memory and Celebration of Steven Heighton

BY JASON HEROUX

In poetry the volta, or turn, is “a rhetorical shift or dramatic change in thought and emotion.” It’s both a fulcrum and a swerve, and the shift is often indicated by the words *but*, *yet*, or *and yet*. A month before he died Steven informed me he was undergoing chemo for pancreatic cancer. “Talk about the ‘turn’ in the poem,” he wrote in an e-mail, addressing how abruptly his life had changed direction. His words brought back memories of a workshop he held at the Kingston Writers Festival last year, titled “No Poem or Story Begins Until the Word ‘But’ Appears,” where he presented the word but as a transition that “ends the set-up and initiates the action – internal or external – that leads to the work’s conclusion and yields its meanings.”

Two days after Steven died I participated in “The Spirit of Poetry Across Ontario” poetry reading, featuring Poet Laureates from around the province. At rehearsal we spoke about his death. John B. Lee, Poet Laureate of Brantford & Norfolk County, hadn’t yet heard the news, and was surprised, processing his grief in the moment. The Poet Laureate of Toronto, Al Moritz, raised Steven’s Selected Poems in the air because he had the book close at hand. Many others shared their thoughts as well. During the event I mentioned how much I was thinking of Steven, and Tom Cull, former Poet Laureate of London, recited a moving and emotional rendition of Steven’s poem “Constellations.” The event highlighted how his death transcended boundaries across the province, the country, the world.

We all have our own vivid memories of Steven and how he continues to impact us personally. There is also a collective loss to the community, and we’ll need to figure out together how to come to terms with that loss. It’s hard to imagine our city without him. Hard to imagine we’ll never hear his deep, comforting voice speak to us again, or see the alert, attentive expression of his face listening to us speak. He influenced and helped countless people, and the lives he’s touched live on. As do his words, his songs. I miss him terribly. He’s gone. But.

Adventures in Arts Advocacy

How we built City support for culture

STORY BY JAN ALLEN, with MARGARET HUGHES
and JOCELYN PURDIE

I'm often asked about the creation of the City of Kingston Arts Fund and other City programs. With municipal elections in Ontario occurring next fall, I wanted to share this arts advocacy story more widely.

To help craft this account, I tapped the memories and archives of friends who were central to the flurry of citizen activity: between 2004 and 2010, Margaret Hughes, Jocelyn Purdie, and I lobbied for the programs that underpin the health of the City's arts and culture today. We did this with an ever-changing cast of enthusiastic collaborators, our efforts buoyed by a groundswell of popular support, friendly media coverage, and parallel efforts by other groups.

In November 2004, the arts in Kingston were under threat. Except for the city-owned Grand Theatre, arts organizations were under duress. The City had cancelled all operating grants and dismantled the appointed Kingston Arts Board in 2001. The sense of crisis grew when Tett Centre-based arts groups and the Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre were faced with uncertain tenancy in their City-owned spaces, and Council eyed further cuts to the already inadequate project grants for community groups. Astonishingly, the municipal government declared the arts a "Strategic Priority," while shelving recommendations for arts-support programs. Artists and their supporters were riled up. By November 2005, mounting tensions prompted the Kingston Arts Council (KAC), itself in a precarious financial state, to establish an Advocacy Committee.

At the first formal meeting of the Advocacy Committee in December 2005, Jocelyn Purdie, Gjen Snider (now Jennifer Snider Cruise), Margaret Hughes, Carolyn Smart, Matt Rogalsky, Jean-Jacques Hamm, Eva Barnes, and I thrashed out goals. We wanted the City to create a Cultural Policy and called for the restoration of annual program and operating support for non-profit arts organizations. These aims were backed by an action plan to research and assess current arts support; to review models of municipal arts programs in peer communities; to articulate a model for Kingston; to undertake regular outreach to City politicians and staff; and, most importantly, to develop an arts-awareness campaign for the 2006 municipal elections.

Our lobbying took hold in September 2006, and the City responded by forming an Interim Advisory Body to shape a new arts grant program and the terms of reference for an Arts Advisory Committee (AAC). City staff Robin Etherington and Mark Fluhrer gathered community representatives Margaret Hughes, Mike McLaughlin, Jim Coles, Glen Fast, Andrea Houghton, Gjen Snider, and me. We worked hard, all the while aware that previous recommendations were ignored. We wondered if real change would happen.

To ensure timely involvement of our base in pre-social media days, the Advocacy Committee built a powerhouse email contact list, ready to mobilize some two thousand arts-supporting electors to reach out to their Councillors. We built relationships with *Kingston Whig-Standard* reporters such as Rob Tripp and Sarah MacWhirter, who took the time to understand our issues and bring them to public attention. We needed this. If you've read this far, you'll have registered the bewildering array of similarly named (yet distinct!) committees. For the uninitiated, City government can be confusing.



On November 6, 2006, the Advocacy Committee hosted an arts-focused all-candidates meeting in cooperation with the Friends of the Tett and the Canadian Federation of University Women. Crammed into the sweltering press room at Portsmouth Olympic Harbour, 250 people came out to show their support for the arts. Hard-hitting questions were posed, and the room was galvanized by KAC Treasurer Julian Brown's endearing, comic presentation: dressed in a bow tie, bingo vest, apron, and changemaker, Brown asked City Council candidates, "Do you think it's right that Kingston arts are only supported by people who play bingo?" Each of the municipal candidates pledged to support the arts.

On January 1, 2007, Margaret Hughes shared a list of recommendations from the London Arts Council about their arts funding program, suggesting these recommendations as a model for KAC administration of the new Kingston Arts Fund. The very next day, she circulated a "Proposal from Kingston Arts Council to Administer Kingston's Community Arts Investment Program." Although the KAC was in an exceedingly fragile state at this time, a consensus emerged that fee-for-service Arts Fund administration would breathe new life into this key organization. By January 25 of that year, we were ready to make our pitch to the Arts, Recreation and Community (ARC) Committee of the newly elected City Council. My report, "An Action Plan for the Arts in Kingston," spelled out, "Why, How, How Much, and Anticipated Impact." A few months later, the City Council under Mayor Harvey Rosen unanimously recommended a funding increase for the arts to a total of \$500K. This funding was to support the recommended \$300K of operating grants and \$130K of project grants, with \$70K going to the KAC for core expenses and grants administration.

The Advocacy Committee celebrated this major achievement, but we knew additional work was needed to ensure that the gains of the arts community were not short-lived. Writing the business plan for grant administration required a huge investment of effort by KAC volunteers, and we needed an Arts Advisory Committee (AAC) of the City and an official Culture Plan to guide future development.

We did not stop our work following approval of the grant program. Other initiatives bubbled forth and pressing tenancy issues awaited resolution. In 2008, poet Joanne Page and I pursued an idea that Elizabeth Greene and others had suggested, persuading the Advocacy Committee to put forward a proposal for a Poet Laureate for the City. Our hearts fell when arts champion City Councillor Bill Glover reported that this initiative was "dead in the water," a big disappointment. No explanation was offered, but it was clear some councillors were nervous about the initiative. To cheer us up, then Modern Fuel Artistic Director Michael Davidge responded with this on-the-spot not-quite-a-haiku: Poet laureate / Dead in the water / Drip, drip, drip.



Artist and Curator Jocelyn Purdie Remembers

My time on the Kingston Arts Council's Arts Advocacy Committee and, later, on the City's Arts Advisory Committee was exciting, an intense period of working with so many people committed to developing a strong arts community in Kingston. As someone who really enjoys being involved behind-the-scenes, I investigated the arts support provided by other cities of comparable size to make a case for City of Kingston support. At the time, we lagged sorely behind those other municipalities. Kudos to the City Council that finally came through with a solid funding program in March 2007! This was the beginning of what is now a vibrant, and still growing, arts sector in Kingston.

Artist and Potter Margaret Hughes Remembers

Soon after I joined the Board of the Kingston Arts Council (KAC) in 2004, I attended a terrific conference in Toronto run by Artscape, the art spaces organization. It dealt with the creative use of under-utilized spaces for the arts and presented a number of inspiring case studies.

At the conference, by sheer serendipity, I sat next to Alan Cohen who had been chair of the London Arts Council. We talked about the situation in Kingston. Arts and Culture were then under Parks and Recreation! We had no Cultural Director nor a Department of Cultural Services. There was no Strategic Plan for Arts and Culture, no Arts Fund. Alan told me about the London Arts Management Programs, including their Arts Fund. He gave me his card.

Over the next year or so the KAC Advocacy Committee made real progress getting support for a program to fund the arts. When the City Council asked us to create a Business Plan for the nascent City of Kingston Arts Fund, I called Alan. He rummaged around in his basement files and found the original hard copy of the Business Plan for the London Arts Fund and mailed it to me in a large manila envelope. It gave us a blueprint.

Although our Business Plan needed to be tailored to Kingston and differed in many ways from London's, we would have had a much more difficult time starting from scratch. On presentation at City Council, we even received a few compliments and it passed, unanimously I believe.

Arts advocates Margaret Hughes, Jocelyn Purdie, and Jan Allen recall the campaign of 2004 to 2010. **PHOTO CREDIT:** Martine Bresson

WITH A MUNICIPAL ELECTION SLATED FOR THE FALL, NOW IS A GREAT TIME FOR ARTISTS TO HAVE A VOICE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS BY DEFINING COMMON GOALS AND IDENTIFYING STRATEGIES TO ENSURE AN ARTS-AWARE CITY COUNCIL IS ELECTED.

We sustained good humour and savoured each victory while doubling down on tactics, including accepting temporary setbacks and being prepared to try again. In this case, with the support of the AAC, Joanne Page and I returned to City Council two years later with the proposal for a Poet Laureate. This time, it was embraced and swiftly approved by Council. Eric Folsom became the first Poet Laureate for Kingston in 2011, and the program remains much loved today.

The City of Kingston Arts Fund has been vital to the dynamism and health of our arts scene. A few years after the fund's creation, the City's museum community—duly inspired—lobbied successfully for the similarly structured City of Kingston Heritage Fund, established in 2013. The KAC continues to provide strong leadership, and arts organizations and programs across the city have leveraged civic support astutely. The City of Kingston created its first Culture Plan in 2010. The Tett Centre arts hub was refurbished, with the beautiful new facility opening in 2014 as a home for nine arts organizations, with eight studios for artists and an attractive waterfront café. The AAC continues to meet regularly. Council approved a Public Art Master Plan for 2014-2019, which has resulted in exciting new commissions. Shaped and advanced by the AAC, the annual Mayor's Arts Awards program was established in 2017. Today, the City's Director of Arts and Culture Services, Colin Wiginton, and his team work tirelessly to foster sensitive support for the sector.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the plight of artists came to the fore when already precarious livelihoods evaporated. While the finances of non-profit arts organizations were stabilized by funding agencies and government programs, there was no local support program for artists. A new group, Grassroots Inde-

pendent Professional Artists of Kingston (GRIP) stepped up to lobby for urgently needed support. The KAC created the Essential Arts Thinking Group in 2020, which informed the "Artists Are Essential" campaign of 2021, and developed the Resiliency Grant for individual artists with one-time funding from the City.

With a municipal election slated for the fall, now is a great time for artists to have a voice in the political process by defining common goals and identifying strategies to ensure an arts-aware City Council is elected. One thing is certain: we need a new Culture Plan. Despite oft-stated intentions to renew the now-expired Plan, no successor has been developed. Without the goal setting and commitment to providing resources such a plan provides, the City risks drifting back to ad hoc and inadequate arts programs. Substantial civic support for the arts is not a given. A united and mutually invested arts scene can play a crucial role in ensuring that programs reflect and grow our city's creative potential.

You can get involved! Kingston Arts Council Executive Director Felix Lee invites anyone interested in the organization's arts advocacy work to contact them at ed@artskingston.ca.



JAN ALLEN is an artist, writer, and arts consultant with a background in visual and media art. Jan moved to the Skeleton Park neighbourhood in 2007. She currently chairs the Board of the Tett Centre for Creativity and Learning.

The TAO of Shad

INTERVIEW BY LYNETTE JOHNSON

After sixteen years in the industry, a Polaris prize nomination, and a gig hosting *Hip-Hop Evolution* on Netflix, Juno Award-winning veteran rapper Shad hardly requires an introduction. I chatted with him about his latest album, touring material written before COVID-19, and his nuanced message in the single *Black Average*ness.

LJ: I have read a bit about your album title TAO and the meaning behind it, but I just wanted to ask for the sake of this article if you can explain the meaning behind the title and the theme?

SHAD: Yes, “TAO” felt like a good enough title to me to sort of hint at everything I’m trying to unpack on the album. First of all, it’s an acronym found in two books that came together in my mind as I was thinking and writing: *The Age Of Surveillance Capitalism* by Shoshana Zuboff and *The Abolition Of Man* by C.S. Lewis. And secondly, TAO obviously has a heavy spiritual connotation to it (Taoism) and the album to me is ultimately spiritual because it’s about humanity and connection. Also, the Tao is a big part of Lewis’ *The Abolition Of Man* so there’s that connection as well. So overall it felt like a title that succinctly suggests the vastness of what’s explored on the album and the spiritual heart of it too.

LJ: What inspired a theme as heavy as losing touch with aspects of being human?

SHAD: Really just an experience I had walking and thinking about life in our society and how strained it seems. That’s when I started to notice that there was hardly a single aspect of our lives, of our humanity—from work to the environment to our social trust to our sense of the transcendent—that wasn’t generally in decline. I got this image in my mind of a circle breaking into pieces and each piece floating away from the others and slowly dissolving, which seemed like an apt metaphor for what I felt was happening to our humanity. So, I carried that image in my mind for some time and it was helpful as a way of understanding our situation. And when it came time to make an album, it also felt like a way of inspiring and organizing a set of songs about various aspects of our humanity.

LJ: I understand that you recorded this before the pandemic. How does it feel to be touring and performing this album after something as traumatic as a global pandemic? Does the material feel relevant still?

SHAD: The music feels almost too relevant. Almost too on the nose! The first song on the album, for example, is called *Out of Touch*, and the chorus is supposed to be about how we’re losing touch with our humanity, but now there’s this new literal layer of losing physical contact with one another. I think many of the songs are fun on a musical level and I tried to inject some humour in everything, so I think



PHOTO CREDIT: Justin Broadbent

For me, success in music has always been making music that I’m proud of. That’s the goal. That’s what brings me joy.

it will be more cathartic than exhausting to hear at a show! But definitely—sadly—still relevant.

LJ: On the record’s second single, “Black Average-ness,” you speak about your relationship with the concept of Black Excellence and what seems like a call to be happy with a life of simplicity. This actually contrasts sharply with a quote from k-os from years ago, who said he just wasn’t content to work for Bell and drive a Honda Civic, which made me laugh. How do you balance this outlook with a successful music career? And does it feel uncomfortable to talk about something with a wide audience that is such a nuanced conversation about Blackness?

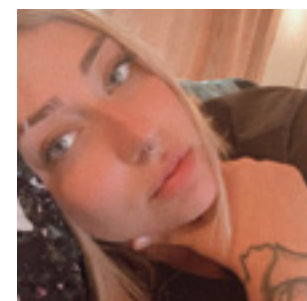
SHAD: Definitely it is challenging to [try to] bring a kind of new-ish, nuanced idea about Blackness into the broader Canadian culture, but it’s a good creative challenge. I had to be as precise as possible without taking any of the light-heartedness and fun out of the song. Naming the song was also tricky! But at the same time, I tried to take the advice in the song and embrace imperfection. I definitely resonate with [that] k-os quote and of course in the song I try to make it clear that I celebrate Black Excellence unreservedly. For me, success in music has

always been making music that I’m proud of. That’s the goal. That’s what brings me joy. On the financial side, success to me is not having to worry too much about money—and I mean worrying about having too little or too much. That’s just how I’ve always seen things.

LJ: This spring is the TAO tour. What’s next for Shad?

SHAD: I think after the tour and some travel this summer for work and pleasure, I’ll probably start thinking about the next album. I’m also consulting on a great CBC doc project about Black Canadian history due out in 2023.

Shad is performing at the Skeleton Park Music Festival on June 18, and hosting a workshop beforehand.

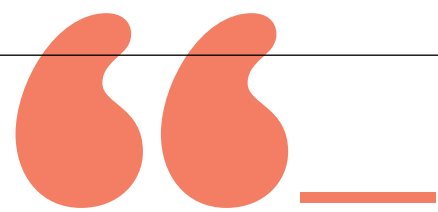


LYNETTE JOHNSON is a tech content strategist, DJ, music devotee, and Dziva’s mama. She can be found on Twitter @postmorebills and wherever someone is serving good coffee.

Charlotte Cornfield's *Highs in the Minuses*

Songwriter's newest album a varied reflection on pandemic life

STORY BY AL RANKIN



I wrote all but two of the songs during the pandemic. It actually gave me a chance to pause, and I feel that they come from a pretty balanced place.

CHARLOTTE CORNFIELD
Highs in the Minuses



The last couple of years have been very difficult for musicians, particularly those who depend on live performance for a good portion of their livelihood and, perhaps more importantly, for their mental health. That's why Toronto singer/songwriter Charlotte Cornfield is eager to get on the road to showcase her newest album, *Highs in the Minuses*. "I wrote all but two of the songs during the pandemic. It actually gave me a chance to pause, and I feel that they come from a pretty balanced place."

Highs in the Minuses is an impressive balancing act indeed, combining Cornfield's trademark vulnerability with a strength that comes from looking at her younger self with a more mature lens. All the songs are autobiographical, intensely personal slices of Cornfield's life, all delivered with an expressive voice under perfect control.

Her previous album, *Shape of Your Name*, was largely a solo effort, with most of the instruments played by Cornfield herself. For this album she wanted a live band feeling and assembled a group comprising Alexandra Levy on bass and Liam O'Neill on drums, with contributions from guitarist Sam Gleason and

Stars singer Amy Millan. With their help Cornfield has created an album with real sonic depth and musicality, while her carefully crafted lyrics, conversational delivery, and distinctive vocals remain at the forefront. You won't find the standard "first verse, second verse, bridge, chorus" musical structure, conventional rhyme schemes, or clichéd phrases or situations in her work. The result is a superb, highly original album that prompted *Rolling Stone Magazine* to name Cornfield "Canada's best kept secret" in a recent review.

The first song on the album, "Skateboarding by the Lake," is a short and gentle introduction to Cornfield's world. With a minimum of words and a softly strummed electric guitar she creates a mood of quiet joy, an almost meditative reflection on the simple act of skateboarding and the warmth of friendship. A pulsing snare drum comes in partway and underpins the song, quietly moving it forward.

That contemplative mood shifts abruptly in the following song, "Headlines," which thrusts the listener into a much harsher reality. It begins, "Woke up sweating over this state of affairs," and we immediately know that we are in the pandemic world

where "the cats are all still yowling in the city where I live." Drums and electric guitars are prominent here while the bleakness of the lyrics is softened by the upbeat catchiness of the tune. This is typical of *Highs in the Minuses* — finding light in the darkness and glimpses of joy in the tough times.

This contrasting of mood and tone is especially evident in many of the songs that deal with relationships, sometimes abusive ones. In "Pac-Man," "a bad man, a bad trip" is "just as slippery as you've always been." Still, she can put the past behind her: "I still trip on the time we had."

"Drunk for You" is a devastatingly beautiful number featuring Cornfield's simple but elegant piano playing. In it she looks back on a particularly toxic relationship: "I don't need a defender/Don't need a never-ender/Don't even need you to be tender/Just don't be mean." The title line repeated five times at the end of the song is one of the most powerful moments on the album.

"Black Tattoo" and "Partners in Crime" are glimpses into happier times and healthier relationships. In "Black Tattoo," another lovely piano ballad, she is with someone who is "not capable of telling lies" and has "the gentlest smile I've ever seen": "I played a song for you/Then you pulled me in/Cue the tiny violins/And the little butterflies/I guess my heart was yours to burglarize."

The profoundly personal musical vignettes Cornfield creates on the album span almost two decades of her life. Now thirty-five, she can look back at the highs and lows she has experienced and keep everything in perspective. As she sings in the upbeat pop tune, "Blame Myself":

"I try not to blame myself/For all the things I did/When I was just a kid."

Now that musicians are getting out on the road once again, Charlotte Cornfield is looking forward to performing in front of a live audience. "I can't wait to try these songs in front of people. The pandemic hit just as I was about to tour my previous album so I now have two whole albums of material to play." She is currently on an extensive U.S. and Canadian tour and a European tour is in the works.

You can catch **Charlotte Cornfield** live at the Skeleton Park Arts Festival in June, where she will be a featured performer.



AL RANKIN is a retired Kingston secondary school drama teacher. He is the artistic director of the Live Wire Music Series and runs Rankin Productions, bringing performers from across Canada and around the world to various Kingston venues.

The Mother and Child Solution

Family-based rehab finally comes to Kingston

STORY BY JAMIE SWIFT

LEFT TO RIGHT: Diane Brennen, Gayle Desarmia, Frances O'Brien, Laurie French (newly minted CEO of Providence Village Incorporated), Sandra Shannon, Adam Newman (Portage Ontario), Amy Demers, Lausanne Rodé (Portage Ontario) and FACSFLA PHOTO CREDIT: Maggie Hogan



Not long after giving birth to her first child, Amy Demers began to experience steady, gnawing abdominal pain. Gall bladder surgery provided relief, but led to a prescription painkiller addiction (Tylenol 3, Percocet, and then OxyContin) and years of excruciating struggle that included attempted suicide and giving up another baby to adoption.

Amy's story has been repeated with tragic familiarity across North America, ever since the Sackler family's Purdue Pharma began pushing OxyContin, a highly-addictive, massively-profitable drug. Corporate strategy hinged on flogging the synthetic opioid to physicians. It worked. A 2021 book on the Sackler dynasty was titled *Empire of Pain*.

In the U.S., the death toll from the opioid epidemic is approaching a million people. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, there were 26,690 apparent opioid toxicity deaths between 2016 and 2021.

As early as 2004, Dr. Peter Vamos, Executive Director of Portage, the prominent Montreal drug rehabilitation agency, warned that OxyContin was seeping into the city. Here in Kingston, drug poisoning is becoming more acute than ever. People are dying on the streets.

Amy Demers, now thirty-five, survived, but she had to leave town to get the help she needed. Her physician, Dr. Adam Newman, suggested she go to Mère-Enfant de Portage, a highly successful Quebec-based residential treatment program. In 2018, she and her son Tristan moved to the Portage facility in Montreal's Little Burgundy, by Oscar Peterson Park.

"If this didn't work," she says now, "I was fully prepared to hand my kids over. And, I hate to say this, but die a junkie."

“PORTAGE SAVED MY LIFE AND MY KIDS’ LIVES,” SAYS AMY. “I LOVE WHAT IT GAVE ME – A LIFE WORTH LIVING.”

That didn't happen, in good measure because the Portage Mother and Child program lasts a full six months, recognizing the bedrock need of keeping mothers and their kids together. Mothers tend to avoid treatment, fearful of losing custody of their children. Portage provides on-site child care together with a supportive therapeutic environment where mothers live with others going through similar struggles.

Amy describes the regime as "kind of military, which is great."

The women had to keep their rooms spotless, their beds "completely tight," and their children ready for day care by 8 a.m. Group sessions included discussions of things that had gone wrong in their past.

"We called it unburdening," she recalls. "It wasn't a bunch of the staff taking care of us. We had to do everything. We had jobs and responsibilities."

"Portage saved my life and my kids' lives," says Amy. "I love what it gave me — a life worth living."

Dr. Adam Newman had long been advocating a mother-and child-program for Kingston. Starting

in 2010, he was instrumental in establishing an organization called the Kingston House of Recovery for Women and Children. By 2021, the KHRWC had become part of Portage Ontario.

The KHRWC still lacks a literal house, despite Amy's story and the Portage model.

Why has it taken so long to bring this common-sense approach to Kingston?

There's long been cultural stigma associated with drug addiction, in good measure due to state criminalization of (some) drugs. Moreover, despite the mounting drug poisoning epidemic, political and bureaucratic inertia has been a persistent obstacle.

Finally, in September 2021, Portage Ontario responded to a provincial request for proposals. Its plan is for seventeen mother-and-child beds at the Sisters of Providence, in partnership with the new Providence Village. The cost? \$260 per bed per day.

"We saw this," says Sister Frances O'Brien, "as a perfect match for our vision of a community of hope, belonging and wellbeing, where the vulnerable receive compassionate care and support services."

The more they've learned about Portage, the more supportive the Sisters have become.

Ontario officials said the government would respond to the proposal within a month. Four months later, Dr. Newman received a call from Toronto. The Ford government was offering \$160 per day, and it expected a response in three days, over a weekend. So, despite underfunding, there was no choice but to keep scrambling.

The local children's aid society (known by the curious acronym FACSFLA (for Family and Children's Services of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington) came to the rescue. A mother-and-child program makes such good sense; it costs FACSFLA about the same amount to support a child in foster care. Newman credits social worker Lousanne Rodé, "a powerhouse" on the KHRWC board, with getting FACSFLA to top up the provincial \$160 by \$50.

The project still falls short, but Adam Newman remains optimistic. "Portage is confident that we'll get the money," he says, adding that he never imagined that it would take twelve years to get this far. "It's such a no-brainer."

Taking children from their mothers represents the death of the sensible. Programs to prevent it are clearly a sensible solution.

"When you go to Portage," says Dr. Newman, "it's so beautiful to see. All these women who are on the verge of losing custody of their children. And you know where that goes? I've seen it so often. Women who end up broken, angry and bitter, and abandoned children who are full of hurt."

In 1997, just after OxyContin hit the market, the drug industry dreamed up something called the Pharmaceutical Marketing Hall of Fame. Purdue Pharma's Arthur Sackler was one of the first inductees. The drug makers boasted that he "helped shape pharmaceutical promotion as we know it today."

If we had an OxyContin recovery Hall of Fame, Amy Demers, Dr. Peter Vamos, and Dr. Adam Newman would surely be leading candidates for membership.



JAMIE SWIFT lives a short walk from Skeleton Park. He is the author of *Civil Society in Question* and co-author of *The Vimy Trap*, and, most recently, *The Case for Basic Income: Freedom, Security, Justice*.



Ontario's Child Care Action Plan

A good start, but work remains

STORY BY LISA PASOLLI and REBECCA HALL

We have a childcare problem. If it wasn't evident before the pandemic (and reader, it was evident before the pandemic), it has become painfully so over the past two years. In Ontario, like the rest of Canada and countries around the globe, households have scrambled to reconfigure their childcare while daycare workers and teachers have gone to herculean efforts to support their students in classrooms and at home.

The good news is that this is not a problem without solutions; caregivers and activists have long been advocating for a universal childcare plan that would make daycare affordable and accessible and improve the conditions of childcare work. Last year, the federal Liberal government promised more than \$30 billion in funding to build an early learning and childcare system. The centrepiece of the federal plan is the promise to achieve an average of \$10-a-day care by 2026, a reduction in parent fees that would be life-changing for many families. In comparison, average daycare rates in Ontario currently sit at approximately \$50/day. But because the childcare crisis is about much more than parent affordability, the federal government has also promised that this funding will be used to improve accessibility, quality, wages, and working conditions.

While some provinces rushed to sign agreements, others – notably, ours – tarried. Here in the Skeleton Park neighbourhood, inspired by a longer history of advocacy and concerned with Ontario's reticence to sign an agreement, we began organizing in support of a national childcare plan. On a sunny September morning, neighbours congregated in McBurney Park to write letters and make calls to MPPs to express our support for a childcare plan. Building on this momentum, we circulated a petition asking Kingston City Council to endorse a national childcare plan. Councillors Mary Rita Holland and Lisa Osanic took up the mantle and City Council passed the motion on September 21. In October, we returned to McBurney Park to celebrate Childcare Worker and Early Childhood Educator Day by organizing a community book drive for local daycares.



Hattie Koenig-Hall stands up for childcare workers.

PROPERLY COMPENSATING AND VALUING CARE WORK IS THE SHARED CONCERN OF DAYCARE WORKERS, PARENTS, AND ALL CAREGIVERS.

In early March, Ontario finally reached an agreement with Ottawa, making it the last province to sign on to the national childcare plan. Ontario's plan contains lots of good news for parents. Almost immediately, parent fees will go down, and it seems the promised \$10-a-day fees by 2026 will become a reality. The provincial government has also promised to create 71,000 new affordable spaces in daycare centres. For those of us with children in daycare – not to mention those of us who are still on a waiting list or have put careers on hold – the effects of these fee reductions and increased access will be profound.

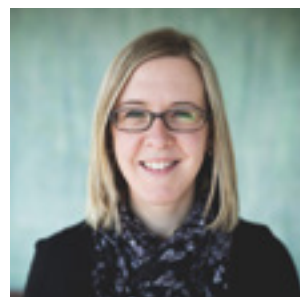
While we can celebrate the wins for parents, we shouldn't overlook the fact that the Ontario plan falls well short of providing adequate support for childcare workers. Given all the rhetoric about caregivers' front-line heroism during the pandemic, it seems especially insulting that the Ontario-Ottawa agreement contains only an \$18/hour minimum wage for trained staff – a rate that is below Canada-wide medians and that will not benefit more than three-quarters of the province's childcare workers.

According to Jen Campbell, director of Something Special Children's Centre at the corner of Chapman and Queen Street, the agreement is "missing the mark when it comes to providing a proper compensation plan for early childhood educators." So many neighbourhood families can attest to the fact that the staff at Something Special are, well, something special. Like so many childcare workers around the city, they create caring, nurturing, and supportive environments for kids and their families. Their work is challenging at the best of times, but the pandemic has magnified the daily stress they face. Campbell explains that Something Special was "hit hard by the extra expenses" that came from enhanced cleaning measures, cohort separation, health screeners, and

more, while also worrying about the risks to their own health. Yet they did "everything possible to keep their doors open to serve families." No wonder, then, that Campbell describes staff burnout and the increasing sense that working in childcare is an "unattractive" option.

Campbell joins many other childcare providers around the province in pointing out that without substantial improvements in wages and benefits for childcare workers, Ontario will not be able to deliver on its plan. As parents, we welcome reduced fees, but we also recognize that high-quality childcare isn't possible unless, as Campbell says, "centres are staffed with educated, professional individuals who are passionate about seeing all children be successful in their early learning journey."

At the neighbourhood events throughout the past year, this message emerged loud and clear. Properly compensating and valuing care work is the shared concern of daycare workers, parents, and all caregivers. The childcare plan is a reminder of the progressive change community organizing can bring, but it is not the end of the road. As always, there is work to be done.



LISA PASOLLI and REBECCA HALL are Skeleton Park residents, parents and childcare advocates. To learn more or join their efforts, email childcarekingston@gmail.com.

Less Is More

Studio22 downsizes but ups its ambition to promote young artists

STORY BY **ULRIKE BENDER**



“

WHEN YOU SPEND TIME WITH AN ARTWORK, OR A BODY OF WORK, YOUR PERCEPTIONS CHANGE.

HERSH JACOB



After sixteen years of running Studio22 on King Street, Ally and Hersh Jacob have reached a milestone. Their commercial gallery has become smaller in terms of space, but more focussed in its intent. Now with a stable of twenty artists under their wing, the two partners in business and in life aspire to discover and nurture professional and emerging Canadian contemporary artists of all ages. In particular, they are hoping to find diverse younger artists exploring areas the couple may not always understand but to which they feel attention must be directed.

On a sunny afternoon in early April, I meet Ally and Hersh in their second-floor gallery overlooking Market Square. A recently installed series of black track lighting illuminates every surface on which paintings and sculptures are placed. Exposed brick and a black ceiling add to the warm surroundings. The space has interesting angles that Ally, as an architectural designer, loves. An ingenious tall rectangular structure on rollers acts as a storage unit and portable room divider, while a black metal cabinet houses posters and prints in large flat drawers. There is instrumental music playing, which makes the gallery acoustically as well as visually appealing.

The evolution of the present space took place organically, but not without challenges. It began in 2003 when Ally needed a small studio to pursue independent studies in art and architecture. At that time the majority of the second floor lay vacant and the building was in disrepair. “It was beautifully ugly,” says Ally, “but it had good bones and the windows were a draw.”

Hersh, whose background is in theatre and graphic design, was ready to make use of the space as an “idea manufactory,” a place to create posters and publications. Then, in 2006, showcasing four artists and photographers, the second-floor space became the first iteration of the Studio22 Open Gallery. Renovations and infrastructure upgrades undertaken by the building’s owner had created an open and more inviting space.

In running the gallery, Ally and Hersh had the opportunity to collaborate just as they do today. While Ally creates exhibitions and manages the business side, Hersh works in his third-floor studio designing and producing exhibition posters – as well as posters of his own work – plus limited-edition exhibition catalogues. Decisions about accepting artists’ submissions are made together, while the artists themselves are given free rein in their choice of subject and medium.

“I like unpredictability,” says Ally. She hopes to be surprised when she visits an artist’s studio and, better yet, hopes the artist has the same appetite for surprise. Those in the gallery’s stable provide new work regularly. “In the case of emerging artists, it’s important to cultivate persistence,” Ally maintains.

Roughly half of the gallery’s artists come from the local area, and one work in particular of a veteran artist excites Hersh. “We have the first painting of Bob Blenderman, made in the 1960s,” he tells me. Blenderman is known for his paintings of Kingston, snapshots of moments in time. “He’s a national treasure.”

As I listen to Ally and Hersh speak, I am convinced they are passionate about their jobs and about art in general. Both have a finely tuned awareness of the visual. Ally takes evening walks with her dog in the Skeleton Park neighbourhood where she and Hersh live, and often looks toward the lit rooms of houses along her route to take in the aesthetic richness of the interiors. Hersh sometimes watches people looking at the art on the gallery walls; he sees their movements and expressions as a form of theatre.

“We sell the art but recognize the necessity of art in life,” Ally tells me. “When you spend time with an artwork, or a body of work, your perceptions change,” adds Hersh. I take their comments to mean that art encourages us to accept other ways of seeing and makes us reflect on the state of our society, the state of our environment, and the nature of aesthetics.

Today, in its 2022 iteration as Studio22 Fine Art, the gallery team includes a marketing and communications manager, Nicole Bruce. The goal is to find new buyers with virgin walls, but also to take a more personal approach with gallery artists. Individual marketing and promotion means those who deserve to be better known will benefit further. They might be picked up by a gallery in a larger city, which might, however, demand sole representation. “And we could eventually lose them,” admits Ally. What may not be good for the gallery in the short term is definitely good for the artist in the long term.

Our conversation over, I return to the back room where I am introduced to Lee Stewart, a young emerging artist who has brought in a series of thirteen 5” x 7” acrylic studies in preparation for his upcoming show. As I leave, Ally and Hersh are standing, thoughtfully looking at his work.



ULRIKE BENDER is a community docent at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre and a writer for the Kingston School of Art gallery web site. She spends a lot of time looking at art.

Finding a Place to Call Home

In a world marked by crass competition, cohousing prizes old values (like sharing)

STORY BY LAWRENCE SCANLAN

The Wolf Willow project in Saskatoon: the first example in Canada of cohousing for seniors.



Amid the cauldron of despair that is Ukraine-under-siege came this Globe and Mail headline: “Conflict turns strangers into roommates.” A vacant office building in Warsaw had been converted into housing for four hundred women and children. No makeshift shelter, this was a seven-storey community forming on the fly. Doctors, teachers, lawyers, and a veterinarian, among others, were offering their services; a kitchen staff was organizing hot meals for all; classrooms, film nights, and daycares were all being run co-operatively by heretofore perfect strangers.

Meanwhile, in Kingston, the lack of housing is a catastrophe unfolding in quick time: rock-bottom vacancy rates, soaring real estate prices, and, for some, the grim prospect of life on the street. Bidding wars, speculative buyers, renters evicted by landlords/developers (dark humour has given us terms such as “renoviction” and “demoviction”): the whole business epitomizes the worst aspects of cutthroat capitalism.

Susan Young has seen enough. Now a mindfulness coach who spent some twenty-five years in the violence-against-women trenches, she is working with several others to establish a cohousing project here. “We’re just starting to ask,” Young told me, “what would fit in Kingston?” Cohousing projects are typically multi-generational, comparatively affordable, environmentally progressive, and built around consensus decision-making. Some are urban, some rural, but all offer a creative alternative to the usual housing models. Cohousing is not new – it’s been around for decades – but it’s been low profile on this continent, until now. (The most recent federal budget from Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, who grew up in a co-op in Edmonton, will direct \$1.5 billion in grants and loans to co-op housing.)

Ten years ago, Young lived at Quayside Village, an award-winning nineteen-unit cohousing complex in North Vancouver. “I got a taste of it,” Young said. “I love the values of cohousing, the philosophy.” More recently, she participated in a workshop on cohousing at the Blue Skies Music Festival, north of Kingston. Young has a toddler granddaughter now, and she cherishes the idea of a living arrangement that would put her in constant contact with young people.

Has there ever been a time when pooling resources made more sense? The idea harkens back to the 1840s in Rochdale, England, when weavers – fed up with the pricey and shoddy goods being sold in shops – opened their own store, selling quality items at fair prices. The Doukhobors offered another model with their collective farms in Western Canada in the early twentieth century. Student housing co-ops formed after the Second World War, including one at Queen’s University (on Earl Street) called the Science ’44 co-op: all in response to an acute shortage of housing for students. The Kingston Student Housing Co-op today accommodates 171 students in twenty-one houses.

The hippie communes of the ‘60s arose out of idealism, as did “the Danish model” (private housing clustered around shared space) launched around the same time. The Canadian Cohousing Network’s (CCN) website (cohousing.ca), offers a history of the early struggle in Denmark to launch cohousing

units before finally winning government support. Today cohousing is common all over Europe, and especially in Germany.

In North America, only a small fraction of groups that form around the idea of cohousing get off the ground. But get off the ground some do. The CCN web site is an excellent starting point for anyone researching the idea, with numerous examples of cohousing projects across Canada. They are typically non-profit, ten to thirty-five households in size, and wide-ranging in their mix of private and public space. According to CCN, 160 such communities have formed in North America in the past three decades, with a hundred more in development. (Germany, to compare, is home to more than two thousand co-operative projects.)

Building a community from scratch — without government backing — is often slow, fractious, and tedious because the tasks are formidable: Form a team, agree on rules to live by, hire an experienced organizer, find an architect, buy land, get municipal approval, and secure a mortgage. But a group of older women in Saskatchewan did all that, thus forming Wolf Willow in Saskatoon (wolfwillow-cohousing.ca) – the first example in Canada of cohousing for seniors.

The twenty-one units in the complex house female residents – some in their fifties, some in their eighties. Each tenant owns her own unit and can have as much privacy or interaction as she likes, while perhaps sharing a vacuum cleaner or laundry facilities. Said one woman to a Global News reporter, “We’re not here to look after each other, we’re here to look out for each other, and I think that was a very important concept for us.”

You have to have skin in the game even to think about cohousing, right? Not always. At a cohousing project in Sidney, British Columbia, someone with equity (and a social conscience) may buy a unit as an investment, and someone without equity might rent it.

The cohousing option, that blend of community and privacy, should be on our radar. Many Canadians — more than half, say some surveys — feel lonely. In Britain, the Minister-of-Loneliness position created four years ago seems unable to stem the tide of isolation there. What if the solution for both loneliness and isolation were, at heart, as simple as huddling with others, as those Ukrainian women and children did when push came to shove?

Susan Young observes that “huge profits are made on housing in this country. We give that power to corporations. I resist that. I want to claim it back.”

To learn more about the Kingston cohousing project, e-mail Susan Young at susanyoung65@gmail.com



LAWRENCE SCANLAN is the author of 24 books, including *A Year of Living Generously: Dispatches from the Front Lines of Philanthropy*.

To Combat Climate Change, Plant Trees — or, Better Yet, Protect Our Wetlands

STORY BY LAWRENCE SCANLAN

To the proverb “Have a child, write a book, plant a tree...” Ed Struzik would add, “save a swamp.”

Struzik, a fellow at the Queen’s Institute for Energy and Environmental Policy, and the author, most recently, of *Swamplands: Tundra Beavers, Quaking Bogs, and the Improbable World of Peat* (published last fall by Island Press), has been writing about science and the environment for three decades. He has won a mittful of prizes, including the Atkinson Fellowship in Public Policy and the Sir Sandford Fleming Medal for contributing to the understanding of science. Of course he supports tree planting as a way of combatting global warming, but he’s become a champion of what he calls an even more important weapon in this critical fight: wetlands. “Nothing against tree planting,” he says, “but restoring wetlands packs a much bigger punch.” One square metre of peatland in northern Canada, for example, holds five times as much carbon as an equivalent space in the Amazon rainforest.

“We have underestimated the value of wetlands,” Struzik told me. Then he listed their many attributes: they filter water, store carbon, stop wildfires, mitigate floods, are reservoirs of enormous and little-studied biodiversity, and are refuges for birds and animals fleeing fire.

In his book, Struzik points out that Europeans were long predisposed against wetlands, a prejudice they brought with them to what is now North America. Nineteenth-century doctors warned against the “miasmatic” vapours in swamps. Even today, “drain the swamp” — an American political metaphor

about stopping corruption — carries with it the notion that swamps are useless, vile, and dangerous. Some two hundred thousand square miles of the earth’s surface have been either drained or degraded. In Ontario, only thirty per cent of our original wetlands remain, while in Toronto the figure is ten per cent. The figure for Kingston is almost certainly a small fraction of what it was.

In Ontario, only thirty per cent of our original wetlands remain, while in Toronto the figure is ten per cent. The figure for Kingston is almost certainly a small fraction of what it was.

Wetlands have many enemies. Developers want to build on them, industrial and agricultural contaminants pollute them, climate change cooks them, invasive species overwhelm them, and farmers can get stroppy when told by, say, a conservation authority what they can or cannot do with wetlands on their private properties.

Ed Struzik talks about National Research Council conferences in the ‘50s and ‘60s when scientists fretted about “the muskeg problem.” But he senses that the tide that has for so long reviled wetlands has turned, and he is optimistic about saving them. He points to ambitious wetland restoration projects under way in Russia, Scotland, Ireland, Indonesia, and Canada. “And I look,” he says, “at the grassroots organizations that have formed to advocate for wetland protection, the citizen scientists doing the same, and university communities realizing that there’s a lot there worth preserving.” The pushback against the proposed development at the old Davis Tannery site is a case in point. The clarion call is to save the trees, save the turtles, and, yes, save the wetland there.

On the other hand, there are ominous signs that not everyone is on board with wetland protection. In December of 2020, six members of Ontario’s Greenbelt Council resigned over changes to the Conservation Authorities Act. The six argued that new rules stripped away wetland protections and prioritized development. Some developers seek what’s called “off-setting,” whereby they would get to develop a wetland in exchange for a fee or a promise to build a new wetland elsewhere.

Struzik slammed the idea as simplistic and ill-advised: “It’s just so much bullshit. There has to be precise groundwater and chemistry. The oil sands people have been playing this game for thirty years.” Struzik worries that some eighteen hundred mining claims around Hudson’s Bay, if developed, would mean new roads, carving up and degrading precious peatlands.

The world’s wetlands, says Struzik, occupy six per cent of the world’s surface but contain thirty per cent of the earth’s carbon pool. Given the already perilous greenhouse effect, the last thing the planet needs is to unleash all the carbon stored in wetlands — from carbon sink to “carbon bomb,” as some put it. Damaged peatlands release carbon; drained peatlands are vulnerable to subterranean fires that can burn for years and further heat our world. The solution is simple: let the wetlands be.

The same federal government support that launched Canada’s much ballyhooed two-billion-trees program, says Struzik, should be offered to the nation’s wetlands. “Fourteen per cent of Canada is wetland,” he says. “These wetlands must be preserved and they must be inventoried. There is no single national park in this country set aside to preserve wetland, and we have some of the most pristine peatlands in the world.”

When it comes to wetlands, says this veteran observer, maybe it’s time to let go of big plans and big ideas. Think small, he advises. “Even a one-hectare swamp,” Struzik says, “can filter water.” And unlike trees with variable and limited life spans, wetlands — kept wet — can last for eons. In some cases, the preservation of a swamp requires cutting down tall trees that act as straws sucking up valuable water.

I love trees and I have planted thousands of them. But Ed Struzik has me convinced: I will go on loving trees, just not the ones in wetlands.

Rail Valley peatlands near the Arctic coast in the NWT PHOTO COURTESY OF: Ed Struzik



LAWRENCE SCANLAN is the author of 24 books, including *A Year of Living Generously: Dispatches from the Front Lines of Philanthropy*.

Car-free, Carefree?

The trials, tribulations — and benefits — of saying no to the auto

STORY BY **JANE KIRBY**

ILLUSTRATION BY **TARA PELOW**

I was six when I first decided I didn't want to drive a car. As a budding environmentalist concerned about climate change, I couldn't see how car ownership made any sense. I've since stuck with this decision even in the face of definite sacrifice in work, living, and recreation opportunities.

The biggest challenge to my car-free existence came with the birth of my son three years ago. Places where we used to be comfortable cycling no longer seem safe with a toddler in tow. Many have said we will eventually cave and buy a car. Car-free living is fine for single people and young couples, they say, but impractical for families.

I'm nothing if not determined so I wondered: How do other people do it?

I'm not alone in my preference for car-free living: When I posted about this in the McBurney Park Facebook group, nineteen people responded to share their experiences of living without a car. The first question was, why would people eschew cars? Everyone I spoke to mentioned the costs — purchasing the car, gas, insurance, repairs, and parking. For many, car ownership is not a choice; they simply can't afford it. For others, myself included, the cost-savings of not owning a car have enabled them to live otherwise unsustainable lifestyles. Sue Livesey owned a car while living rurally and raising her kids but needed to give it up when she moved back to town and assumed a mortgage. "My housing situation was only going to work if I got rid of the car expenses," she says. "As soon as I made the decision to go car-free it felt great . . . a huge burden had been lifted . . . financially and . . . in aligning my personal choices with my beliefs about the overuse and over-dependence on cars."

Environmental concerns have always been forefront to me when considering a car-free life: The transportation sector accounts for twenty-seven percent of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. While reducing car use on an individual level won't make up for government and industry failure to combat climate change, it is part of the solution.

Matt Rogalsky and Laura Cameron, who recently gave up their car in favour of bicycles, told me "slowing down, hearing what is going on as you ride along, feeling more connected to nature and to neighbours," were among the benefits of spending less time in cars.

The challenges of living car-free are predictable: Inadequate bike lanes and active transportation routes; the expense and inconvenience of our public transportation system; the lack of snow clearing from sidewalks and bike lanes in winter, and the problem of salt on those same surfaces in the spring. Although there are for-profit car-sharing networks, these are only affordable and useful in very particular situations. For cyclists, safety — from the dangers of traffic and the same harassment and violence often faced by pedestrians — is a central concern.



When I posted about my preference in the McBurney Park Facebook group, nineteen people responded to share their experiences of living without a car.

Several years ago I took a car-share home from Toronto with a person on the committee that advised the city on cycling issues. I complained about a route I cycled along Bath Road five times a week to the circus gym where I trained and coached, to a point where the bike path ended abruptly. He told me the bike lane did not continue further west because "there are no bikeable destinations" on that part of Bath Road.

I was aghast: Had I not just told him I biked there several times a week? What did he mean by "no bikeable destinations"?

Admittedly, both the bike lanes and the transit routes in that area have since been improved. But my experience highlights the fact that many people — even those who are recreational cyclists — rarely consider that cyclists and transit-users need to get to the same places car-drivers do.

"I very often will not even consider participating in events that I can't easily walk or bike to," says Livesey. "I miss the sense of being able to go wherever I want whenever I want."

Livesey mentioned easy access to swimming, hiking, and canoeing as some of the things she misses out on living car-free. Rogalsky and Cameron noted car-free life would be easier if there were "more urban trails . . . so adventure is always within reach without a car."

I love hiking, so I'm not surprised to learn others struggle to access nature when giving up cars. I've often wondered why there is no transit or bike route to Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area, only a few kilometers from my home. When we consider that many people can't afford cars, and far fewer women than men own cars, this becomes an equity issue — why is nature reserved only for those with access to a vehicle?

Expansion of safer bike and transit infrastructures would go a long way to making car-free life easier. Cameron and Rogalsky also suggest government incentives such as grants for personal bicycles and free urban bike share programs.

Livesey suggests an expansion of car-share programs, and "a societal shift . . . where folks who own cars share them with friends and family," noting she has several cars she can borrow regularly. Rogalsky and Cameron, too, occasionally borrow a friend's car.

This is where my family has landed. We now formally share the little-used car of a friend who needed a place to park the vehicle; my partner wanted to take a once-a-week job out of town. We split the costs for insurance and repairs, and coordinate our respective usage on an ad hoc basis. This arrangement works well for us, and I wonder how similar situations could be scaled up if there were supports for arrangements like cooperatively owned cars. Not exactly car-free living, but until the active and public transportation networks and supports we need become a reality, it is a practical step in the right direction.



JANE KIRBY is a writer, editor, and circus artist who lives with her family in the Williamsville neighbourhood. She took some driving lessons when she was sixteen but hasn't been behind the wheel since.

All SPAF! Programming is FREE ADMISSION

SPAF! 2022 FESTIVAL PROGRAM

PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN WATER BOTTLE & UTENSILS FOR A WASTE-FREE FESTIVAL

WEDNESDAY JUNE 15

The Screening Room, 120 Princess St.
(Advance registration only)

7:00pm - 9:00pm

Film Screening: "Land And Language"

A film by Josh Lyon and Shelby Lisk in collaboration with the Kingston Indigenous Languages Nest. Co-presented by the Kingston Canadian Film Festival.

THURSDAY JUNE 16

In Skeleton Park

(Rain location: Next Church, 89 Colborne St.)

7:00pm - 9:00pm

Movement Market: "Grounded 2.0"

Featuring works by Movement Market Collective and Kingston Freestyle Dance

FRIDAY JUNE 17

In Skeleton Park

7:30am

Yoga by Jeb Thorley

With music by Dave Barton & Friends

7:30pm - 9:30pm

Francisco Corbett

"In Eulogy"

Live painting, dance, and music.

(Rain location: Next Church #89 Colborne St.)

"Francisco's work will also be exhibited at The Elm Café (303 Montreal St.) throughout the festival.



SATURDAY JUNE 18 IN SKELETON PARK

In Skeleton Park

7:30am

Yoga by Jeb Thorley

With music by Dave Barton & Friends

10:00am - 5:00pm

Artisan Fair, Food Vendors, Mural Making (Side Stage 1), Face Painting (Side Stage 3), Community Info Booths

10:00am

Remesha Drums (Main Stage)

Co-presented by Centre Culturel Frontenac

11:00am

OS Project (Main Stage)

11:00am - 4:00pm

Workshop Side Stage 1: Mural Making

Side Stage 3: Face Painting, Arts & Crafts

Side Stage 2: Dancing CONTENT with

MMCollective

* 11:00am - 4:00pm

"Building a Mural Through Movement"

with BirdGirlArts (All Levels/Ages)

* 11:30 - 12:00pm / 12:30 - 1:00pm /

2:00 - 2:30pm / 3:30 - 4:00pm

"Rhythm & Dancing" with

Camille Spencer (4-10 yr olds)

Focused on music, dance and storytelling

* 12:00- 12:30pm / 1:30-2:00pm /

/ 2:45 - 3:15pm

"Choreography" with Kay Kenney

Warm up & learn some dance phrasing

(All Levels)

12:00pm

Sadaf Amini (Main Stage)

1:00pm

Stucco (Main Stage)

* 1pm Workshop @ Next Church # 89 Colborne St.

Whose Land Is This Anyway? with Chief David Mowat, Alderville Mississauga First Nation.

2:00pm

Piner (Main Stage)

3:00pm

Solstice Games! (Side Stage 3)

4:00pm

Dave Mowat and the Curbside Shuffle

(Main Stage)

5:00pm.

Charlotte Cornfield (Main Stage)

6:00pm

Joyful Joyful (Main Stage)

Co-presented by Kingston PRIDE

Poetry with Sadiqa de Meijer

7:00pm

SHAD (Main Stage)

SUNDAY JUNE 19 IN SKELETON PARK

In Skeleton Park

7:30am

Yoga by Jeb Thorley

With music by Dave Barton & Friends

10:00am - 5:00pm

Artisan Fair, Food Vendors, Mural Making (Side Stage 1), Face Painting (Side Stage 3), Community Info Booths

10:00am

Rabbit and Bear Paws Puppet Show

(Main Stage)

11:00am

Savannah Shea & Joel Williams (Main Stage)

11:00am - 4:00pm

Side Stage 1: Mural Making

Side Stage 3: Face Painting, Arts & Crafts

12:00pm

Jukebox County (Main Stage)

12:00pm - 3:00pm

Dancing CONTENT with Kingston Freestyle Dance (Side Stage 2)

Meet the Kingston Freestyle Dance team, each dancer teaching a designated style.

Try different styles or focus on learning one style. Focus will mainly be on "Popping" and "Breaking". **All levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced) are welcome.

12:00pm

Cris Derksen @ Katarokwi Indigenous Arts & Food Market (Kingston City Hall)

1:00pm

Danielle Hope Edwards (Main Stage)

2:00pm

Kakaow (Main Stage)

2:00pm

Workshop: Songwriting with Ron Sexsmith & The Gertrudes @ Next Church #89 Colborne St.

3:00pm

Urban Science Brass Band (Main Stage)

4:00pm

Cris Derksen (Main Stage)

Co-presented by Katarokwi Indigenous Arts & Food Market

Poetry with Sadiqa de Meijer

5:00pm

Ron Sexsmith (Main Stage)

SKELETON PARK ARTS FESTIVAL

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